



*Routledge Studies in Second World War History*

# **INTELLECTUAL COLLABORATION WITH THE THIRD REICH**

## **TREASON OR REASON?**

Edited by  
Maria Björkman, Patrik Lundell and  
Sven Widmalm





# Intellectual Collaboration with the Third Reich

The book investigates the rather neglected “intellectual” collaboration between National Socialist Germany and other countries, including views on knowledge and politics among “pro-German” intellectuals, using a comparative approach. These moves were shaped by the Nazi system, which viewed scientific and cultural exchange as part and parcel of their cultural propaganda and policy. Positive views of the Hitler regime among intellectuals of all sorts were indicative of a broader discontent with democracy that, among other things, represented an alternative approach to modernization which was not limited to the German heartlands.

This book draws together international experts in an analysis of right-wing Europe under Hitler; a study which has gained new resonance amidst the wave of European nationalism in the twenty-first century.

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# **Intellectual Collaboration with the Third Reich**

**Treason or Reason?**

**Edited by Maria Björkman, Patrik Lundell,  
and Sven Widmalm**

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# 1 Collaboration and normalization

*Maria Björkman, Patrik Lundell &  
Sven Widmalm*

The rise of right-wing extremism is a current as well as an historical problem. A word that has been used a good deal lately is “normalization”, the process of making what has seemed politically outrageous appear mainstream. The concept hints at the importance of cultural processes for political change. “Politics is downstream from culture” is a slogan associated with the American and European far right which implies that cultural normalization paves the way for political change.

But as culture is also a result of politics, the relationship between the two broad categories is perhaps best described using the “idiom” of co-production – i.e. they define one another in myriad ways that cannot be understood as linear or unidirectional (Jasanoff 2004). National Socialism is a prime example of this dynamic. The idea of a national culture, fostered by a racially homogenous “people’s community” (*Volksgemeinschaft*), was not invented by the Nazis but was central to their movement; at the same time, they attempted to establish a fascist culture (including in academic research, also the natural sciences) founded on the Nazi “world view” (*Weltanschauung*). As this book will discuss, Nazi cultural policy (*Kulturpolitik*) however often toned down extreme aspects of the Nazi world view, which helps explain why many prominent intellectuals in other countries participated in intellectual exchange with Germany or joined German-led international organizations. They were not necessarily enamoured of the regime or its ideology; intellectual co-operation was often seen as reasonable for pragmatic purposes. After all Germany had been a leader in many artistic, scholarly and scientific fields and to some extent still was.

This book discusses relations between Nazi Germany and a host of other countries in various intellectual – mostly academic – areas. The overarching theme, then, is cultural relations with Nazi Germany from a comparative perspective. An important aim is to throw light on the rationality behind and mechanisms of collaboration, which – because it involved the Third Reich – might easily be interpreted as politically suspect and morally sinister. German cultural policy during the Nazi era has been broadly dealt with in previous scholarship, as has individual actors. This book contributes a “foreign” perspective, demonstrating through 15 case studies on exchange in the sciences, arts and humanities how cultural-policy ambitions in the



Third Reich meshed with those of other countries – democratic as well as autocratic, European as well as non-European.

Collaboration of intellectuals with the Nazi regime raised questions dealt with already six years before the *Machtergreifung* by the Jewish philosopher and writer Julien Benda, in his famous book *La Trahison des Clercs* (1927) (“The Treason of the Intellectuals”, 2007). It is fuelled by rage against the intellectual class that Benda himself belonged to and that, as he thought, had abandoned the Enlightenment legacy by supporting the organized class hatred and virulent nationalism that had emerged in the 19th century. By abandoning a rational enlightened tradition in favour of irrational extremist movements like Italian fascism, Soviet bolshevism, or the Action Française, treasonous intellectuals imperilled Western culture. Benda focussed on right-wing radicalism, the roots of which he identified in German culture. From Romanticism onwards, German intellectuals had chosen to serve Power and abandoned the ambition to offer moral guidance from an independent position.

Our concern is similar to Benda’s; the tension between intellectual autonomy and political partisanship in the face of vile extremism informs many of the book’s chapters. Unlike Benda, however, we discuss how this conflict played out in international exchange and collaboration. Furthermore, our concern is less with the moral probity of intellectuals and more with the rationality behind collaboration. One aspect that is discussed or at least implied in many contributions is that of normalization – not in the sense that the Nazi world view was necessarily made to seem normal but in the sense that it was often played down so that Nazi Germany could be accepted as a partner or even a leader in international collaboration.

Patrik Lundell has argued, in the case of Sweden, that “pro-German” (*tyskvänliga*) intellectuals who promoted collaboration with Nazi Germany tended to argue in accordance with a specific rationality emphasizing the need for an “objective” or “neutral” evaluation of conditions there (Lundell 2016, 2017). Using Daniel Hallin’s (1986) model for analysing objectivity in relation to media discourses in Sweden, Lundell describes this strategy as an attempt at normalization: by deemphasizing or toning down aspects of the Nazi world view, like anti-Semitism, Nazi politics could be removed from the category of the outrageous, concerning which there could be no serious discussion, to that of reasonable discourse, where debate and dialogue about the objective state of affairs in Germany was permissible and collaboration legitimized. As we will see in the following chapters, this strategy mirrored that of Third-Reich cultural policy, which was not so much about spreading hard-core Nazi ideology as about making Germany accepted as a collaborative partner. This rationality served the dual purpose of strengthening German cultural, academic, and therefore political influence and of providing Germany with much needed intellectual input from other countries – autocratic as well as democratic. The normalization of Nazi Germany was however far from ideologically neutral. Cultural exchange with the Third Reich involved participation in the co-production of a nascent fascist World Order founded on the belief, not in itself

peculiarly fascist, that “any vision of international political, legal, or economic order must be accompanied by an international vision of cultural order” (Martin 2016, p. 3, cf. Iriye 1997, ch. 1). Despite their fundamental hostility towards internationalism, fascist states therefore “attempted to assume and copy its structural pattern” (Herren 2017, p. 192).

German cultural policy relied on a system of public institutions. The Auswärtiges Amt (AA, German Foreign Office), acting through embassies, legations or consulates was central in these endeavours. They were closely associated with a system of institutions promoting academic exchange, importantly the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD, German Academic Exchange Service) and later the Deutsche Wissenschaftliche Institut (DWI, German Science Institute) (Hausmann 2001). The propaganda ministry also had a stake in academic and cultural collaboration through the Deutsche Kongress-Zentrale, created in 1934 among other things to regulate academic exchange (Herren 2002).

On one level, there was nothing exceptional about this. Cultural policies aimed to strengthen national brands were common in Europe and elsewhere and became more organized after the First World War. But there was a fascist tendency reflected in Germany’s aspiration to organize various cultural interest groups – through their own Reichskulturkammer (Reich Chamber of Culture) and its eight subdivisions and through international bodies organized on corporatist principles with each country being represented by a national organization. The ideology behind the system was, according to Benjamin Martin, simultaneously national and international – “inter-national” – in that national specificity was emphasized along with the need for collaboration. A strong motive for non-German organizations to join was professional interest to regulate, e.g. international copyright law. At the same time, by joining international organizations, like the Permanent Council for International Cooperation among Composers, leading intellectuals and the corporations they represented, legitimized the Third Reich’s ambition to guide European cultural developments (Garberding 2007; Martin 2016).

The public face of Nazi cultural policy was hence somewhat benign, emphasizing national specificity and common professional interests. As Pamela M. Potter has argued, cultural policy in Germany itself did not have the impact suggested by propaganda manifestations like book burnings or exhibitions of *entartete Kunst/Musik*. It targeted specific individuals and groups but allowed for a wide variety of artistic expressions including modernistic ones if the artists were not seen as enemies of the regime (Potter 2016). Potter emphasizes that many historians have shown that modernistic ideals indeed thrived among radical right-wingers in Weimar and Nazi Germany (cf. Herf 1984; Griffin 1991), but that popular and even academic accounts often revert to the misleading image of total suppression. This was true also of the sciences where much has been made of the attempts by the likes of Nobel Laureates Philipp Lenard and Johannes Stark to create German or Aryan versions of, e.g. physics, chemistry and mathematics that



should be practically oriented and devoid of Jewish influences. Such attempts failed, and much research carried out in the Third Reich was “normal” according to internationally accepted scientific standards (Walker 1995; Hentschel 1996). The attempts to create a German version of Christian doctrine, founded on the idea that Jesus was not Jewish, likewise did not gain much traction with a regime that was not religiously oriented (Heschel 2008).

The question of normalization echoes in fascist historiography, not least in relation to the idea of modernity. National Socialism has often been described as a form of cultural madness, founded on irrational hatred, for example what Saul Friedländer (1997) called “redemptive anti-Semitism”. But there is also a tradition (often Marxist) of downplaying ideological aspects of fascism, favouring interpretations that relate to the logic of modernity, e.g. contradictions in the capitalist system. A controversial example is Götz Aly and Susanne Heim’s *Architects of Annihilation* (2002 [1991]) describing the genocidal eastward expansion of the Third Reich as a technocratic project following a capitalist rationality. Zygmunt Bauman has argued that “it was the spirit of instrumental rationality, and its modern, bureaucratic form of institutionalization, which had made the Holocaust-style solutions not only possible, but eminently ‘reasonable’” (Bauman 1989, p. 18). Richard J. Evans has been critical of such approaches but nevertheless stresses that using “barbarism as the central conceptual tool for understanding the Third Reich is to mistake moral condemnation for thought” (Evans 2015, loc 1413). Many historians of fascism agree that the movement was not merely a cultish hodgepodge but had an ideologically coherent core built around the idea of national (in Germany also racial) exceptionalism (Griffin 2012). Without subscribing to any essentialist definition of fascism, we do agree that Nazi ideology displayed a level of coherence, with race-biological ethno-nationalism as a central characteristic, combining irrational elements like redemptive anti-Semitism with scientism. This goes to prove that “modern science and technology on their own are no guarantee against barbarism” (Herf 2000, p. 74). As Robert Proctor has pointed out, Nazi medicine was not necessarily bad science nor devoid of ethics, but the rationality behind the Nazi doctors’ ethical considerations followed a “criminal logic” (Proctor 2000, p. 343). Hence, normalization in the area of intellectual exchange was not only a matter of de-emphasizing gruesome aspects of the Nazi world view, be it by Nazi cultural institutions and individuals or by their partners abroad. It also chimed with the Nazi’s de facto affirmation of many intellectual pursuits that were considered normal and modern in e.g. western democracies. Nazi ideology was nevertheless part of what has often been referred to as the Faustian bargain of collaboration. Though subdued, it nevertheless crossed the borders of nations and minds as a form of intellectual contraband.

### **The Swedish case**

Sweden does not figure prominently in this volume. But as it originates from a conference organized by a research project, “Brown networks”

(*Bruna nätverk*; Björkman *et al.* 2016a), focussing on intellectual relations between Sweden and Germany, the book's thematic and analytical scope, which was first established from a Swedish perspective, will now be elaborated using examples from this project and other Swedish research.

Like many other western countries, Sweden introduced universal suffrage in connection with the First World War (1919). In the interwar years, the party system was dominated by reformist Social Democracy on the one hand (sometimes collaborating with a centrist agrarian party) and a coalition of right-wing parties on the other, with liberals losing influence. These mainstream parties were flanked by small extremist ones on the left and right. During the Second World War, there was a Social-Democratic led coalition government.

Ties between Sweden and the (second) German Reich had been strong in many areas: political (right as well as left-wing), economic, academic, cultural, military, religious and so on. The First World War saw a division along political lines with the left mostly supporting the Entente and the right leaning more towards the Central Powers. While American influences did grow in the 1920s, ties to Germany remained largely intact. Sweden, for instance, collaborated with moderates among the Entente in the International Research Council (IRC) and the League of Nations to put an end to the ostracism of Germany from those bodies. Like in, e.g. the Netherlands, Switzerland and Denmark, neutrality was seen as a distinguishing political and also cultural trait constituting an obligation to mediate between the great powers, not only in politics but also in culturally significant areas like research and religion (Lettevall *et al.* 2012). With the rise of National Socialism attitudes to the “new Germany”, broadly speaking, reproduced the dividing line from the First World War with left-wing intellectuals being mostly hostile to the Hitler regime and conservatives showing a more positive interest, but with both sides remaining culturally attached to Germany. In the first years after the *Machtergreifung* perplexity, hostility and confusion (not least regarding anti-Semitism) characterized Swedish reactions. In a few years, cultural and academic relations were however re-established, also by many who disliked the regime. Exchange continued from around 1935 and throughout much of the war, not only among academics and intellectuals like journalists but in areas like religion, business, government, sports, and not least the military (Richardson 1996).

During these years, popular support for German-style fascism was low in Sweden and right-wing extremist parties got almost no votes in the general elections (Åmark 2011, ch. 9). Among academics and other intellectuals, there were few organized fascists. There were however several prominent individuals and organizations that promoted the German cause, and sometimes Nazi ideology. Important individuals – leaders in their respective fields in Sweden as well as internationally – included world famous geographer, “explorer” and writer Sven Hedin, Nobel Laureate chemist Hans von Euler, pioneering geneticist and plant breeder Herman Nilsson-Ehle, leading literary historian and journalist Fredrik Böök, pathologist Folke Henschen and



histologist Gösta Häggqvist (both at the Karolinska Institute), sculptor Carl Milles, and composer Kurt Atterberg. The first important Nazi-positive organization with intellectual pretensions was Samfundet Manhem (the Manhem Society), created in 1934, unusual in openly promoting anti-Semitism; its impact was however limited because of its extremism (Berggren 2013, 2014). There were a number of more mainstream organizations in Sweden that became more or less co-ordinated (*gleichschaltet*) with time. Among these were several Swedish–German “friendship societies” predating the Third Reich – importantly Swedish–German societies in the larger cities. There were also many clubs and organizations catering to various interests among members of the German–Swedish community – social, cultural, philanthropic, or professional (for a list, see Forsén 2015, pp. 347–350). A special position was occupied by the general-interest German Colonies that were founded in ten Swedish towns and cities from 1935 and that were Nazified from the beginning. Most important among these was the German Colony in Stockholm, with 2,500 individual as well as organizational members (Forsén 2015, pp. 99–102 and *passim*). Relations between these organizations and the German legation were often close.

The most important academic and cultural “pro-German” (though not explicitly pro-Nazi) organization in Sweden, with more than 5,000 members, was Riksföreningen Sverige–Tyskland (RST, the Swedish–German National Association), founded in the southern university town Lund in 1937. It was a kind of friendship society and not officially part of the network of co-ordinated associations that took orders from Berlin. Its stated mission was to promote a “neutral” or “objective” – i.e. positive – image of the “new Germany”, which it did through its journal, through other publishing ventures, and through cultural activities like lectures and film screenings (Lundell 2017). A main target of RST propaganda was the Swedish press which they claimed gave a factually distorted image of developments in Germany. Not least the liberal daily *Dagens Nyheter*, owned by the Jewish Bonnier family, was a target of criticism. Among RST’s members were many university teachers, physicians, lawyers and so on, including all of the above-mentioned prominent “pro-German” intellectuals except for Böök (Hübinette 2002).

It is not a coincidence that RST was founded in Lund. Fascist student organizations were very active there, and Lund probably had more Nazi sympathizers among university teachers than other establishments of higher education in Sweden (Oredsson 1996). The most notorious demonstrations of anti-Semitism among Swedish students were however not limited to Lund. In 1939, students in Stockholm and Uppsala as well as Lund demonstrated and voted against a suggestion that ten Jewish physicians would be allowed to practice in Sweden, claiming that they would crowd out Swedes from the labour market (Larsmo 2007; Högberg 2013; Berg 2016; Ljungström 2016).<sup>1</sup> Similarly, in 1937, Nazi students at Stockholm University demonstrated against the appointment of the expatriated Jew David Katz to a chair in psychology (Nilsson 1989).



The Swedish press was divided along ideological lines with regard to the Hitler regime, with liberal or socialist papers being mostly critical and conservative papers being more “neutral” or mildly positive. A small number of newspapers were outspokenly pro-Nazi, but their readership was limited. On the other hand, and similarly to the RST journal, a few well-established newspapers gave “pro-German” intellectuals a platform with significant impact, thereby helping to normalize the discourse concerning Nazism. After war broke out, the coalition government issued regulations that the press should not upset any belligerent power, which in practice meant Germany. A series of repressive measures were taken against the few papers that did not comply. Furthermore, during the early war years, journalistic exchange was upheld through “press visits” by Swedes to Germany and occupied territories and by Germans to Sweden (Schierbeck 1995). This was in line with the Government’s policy of neutrality according to which the press should present as “objective” a view of events as possible (Lundell 2017, p. 104). Before it became obvious that Germany was losing the war, normalization hence had the status of official press policy in Sweden.

Exchange between Sweden and Germany during the Third Reich was guided by social networks of like-minded intellectuals and by a system of Swedish and German institutions, but there is no sharp distinction between these categories. Nilsson-Ehle, von Euler, and Hedin for instance constituted an extremely powerful hub by virtue of their extensive networks, national as well as international, and also because of their institutional affiliations. Nilsson-Ehle, a Nazi sympathizer, was a central figure internationally in genetics and plant breeding (Tunlid 2004). He was likewise a leading proponent of eugenics and for many years a board member of Statens institut för rasbiologi (the Government Institute for Race Biology, 1922–1958). There he was a close ally of the Director Herman Lundborg, also a Nazi sympathizer, and helped promote international contacts that (years before the rise of National Socialism) included several future leaders of Nazi eugenics, like Eugen Fischer, Fritz Lenz, Hans Günther and Ernst Rüdin (Hagerman 2016). In 1937, Nilsson-Ehle became the first chairman of RST (cf. below). von Euler, who originated from Germany, was a central figure in Swedish–German scientific and cultural relations for more than half a century. He was very active among German expats in Stockholm: in 1937, he became head of the Germany Colony and, from 1941, he chaired the board of the Nazified German School founded that year. He received several awards and honours from Nazi Germany and was, at one point, considered for the position of director of the Reichsforschungsrat (Reich Research Council) (Widmalm 2011). Among the three, Hedin was the most outspoken Nazi sympathizer. He met with Hitler – an admirer of his books – on numerous occasions and was the only foreigner (among the planned five, one for each continent) to address “world youth” at the Berlin Olympics in 1936 (Odelberg 2012, pp. 54–58). Nilsson-Ehle, von Euler and Hedin constituted such a strong pillar of support for the “new Germany” also because they

were connected with one another socially. All three belonged to the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences and the RST; Hedin was also a fellow of the literary Swedish Academy; von Euler and Hedin were both members of the board of the co-ordinated Svensk–Tyska föreningen (Swedish–German Association) in Stockholm. Nilsson-Ehle and von Euler collaborated scientifically and Hedin used von Euler’s expertise concerning scientific conditions in Germany when writing his notorious tribute to the Hitler regime, *Germany and World Peace* (1937a, 1937b).<sup>2</sup> Similar networks existed in the humanities, not least German studies (*Germanistik*), though they were not focussed on individuals that were close to the trio of scientists when it came to national and international stature (Almgren 2005; Åkerlund 2010; Garberding 2015).

As Sheila Faith Weiss (2005) has shown, international activities of leading German eugenicists were co-ordinated to help fulfil the regime’s general cultural-policy goals. The fact that eugenics was at the core of Nazi ideology, and that eugenicists outside of Germany were divided with respect to Nazi views on matters like race and sterilization, made it especially challenging to maintain good relations and a position of German leadership in this field. When Ernst Rüdin was forced to resign from the presidency of the International Federation of Eugenic Organizations (IFEEO) in 1936, due to a four-year time limitation, he could not be replaced by a compatriot as the presidency was supposed to circulate between member states. The numerically dominant and in all senses co-ordinated German fraction of IFEEO therefore promoted non-German candidates that supported Nazi eugenics. They found their man in Torsten Sjögren, a young Swedish psychiatrist who had worked with Rüdin in Munich, had been mentored by Lundborg and was supported also by Nilsson-Ehle (themselves considered suitable successors to Rüdin by the Germans but judged to be in too frail health). As president of IFEEO, Sjögren would indeed promote Nazi eugenics, so this episode exemplifies successful cultural policy, in the intellectual domain most closely associated with Nazi ideology to boot (Björkman 2011, p. 136, 142–143; Kühl 2013, pp. 107–108).

The eugenics network was similar to others in that it acted informally and also through channels provided by the system of institutions defining Nazi cultural policy that, as we have pointed out, was somewhat sanitized from an ideological perspective. A closer look however reveals sinister aspects like the continuous monitoring of political reliability and of course race. Diplomats and civil servants attached to the legation in Stockholm or to one of the consulates tried to keep a tab on these issues; sometimes, Swedish academics who were sympathetic to the “new Germany” were used as informers; besides, one closely followed what was written in the press and sent reports, press clippings or even verbatim translations of articles revealing the political alignment of Swedes back to Berlin (Almgren 2005; Widmalm 2016).

An illustrative example of this kind of monitoring is the expedition of three German historians to Sweden and Denmark in 1937. Masked as



a scholarly visit, it was in reality an attempt by the Nord- und Ostdeutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (North and East-German Research Association) to gauge attitudes among Scandinavian historians towards Nazi Germany – in particular, views on future research collaboration and on the treatment of Jews (Widmalm 2016, pp. 66–77). In a lengthy report, the Kiel historian Otto Scheel described attitudes among Swedish colleagues as mostly positive. The vice chancellor of Stockholm University, historian Sven Tunberg, saw no obstacles to Swedish–German exchange; as for the “Jewish question”, he explained that the negative reactions in Sweden to Nazi anti-Semitism depended on the circumstance that there were so few Jews in Sweden and that it should not cause any problems when it came to collaboration. Scheel claimed that these opinions were typical among Swedish historians. Because of Tunberg’s position, his support was seen as especially important and he became involved in complicated negotiations concerning exchange that included discussions about which scholarly topics were most appropriate from a *political* perspective, to help strengthen cultural ties between Sweden and Germany. Even the Schutzstaffel (SS) was put on the case, apparently because it was thought that Tunberg might become some sort of mole. As was pointed out by Goebbels’ Kongress-Zentrale already in 1936, German visitors to Sweden should however not take for granted that positive expressions about developments in Germany were sincere; they may only be a sign of politeness. And Tunberg’s own views are indeed difficult to pin down. But he continued supporting German exchange also when he became head of Swedish propaganda and counter-propaganda during the war, thus actively contributing to officially sanctioned normalization.

German cultural policy vis-à-vis Sweden was characterized by normalization in the sense that one attempted to play down controversial aspects of Nazi politics – not only anti-Semitism and political persecution, but also overtly ideological aspects of German research and research policy associated with such Nazi coryphées as Bernard Rust, Alfred Rosenberg and Heinrich Himmler, unsavoury characters also in the eyes of many Swedish Third-Reich supporters. Therefore, it was important to keep track not only of which Swedes visited Germany, e.g. to lecture or be awarded academic honours (a very significant aspect of exchange to the German mind). German academics visiting Sweden were also monitored with respect to what views they expressed regarding the fatherland and not least what impression they made professionally (cf. Weiss 2005). The head of DAAD in Stockholm, Hermann Kappner, pointed out in 1936 that, in order to gain the trust of scientific institutions in Sweden, one must avoid anything that could be seen as propaganda and stand by strict professional values. Only then would it be possible to make the Swedes accept exchange with “such lecturers that would best serve the German cause” (quoted in Widmalm 2016, p. 63). Reversely, Kappner explained, Swedes should be invited to Germany only by universities and similar bodies with high scientific credibility – not by German–Scandinavian societies and the like that would always be suspected of

being politicized. A planned visit by the crackpot Nazi historian Herman Wirth in 1935 was consequently seen as problematic because Swedes might not think highly of his Ahnenerbe-style research (Hermann Kappner to Wilhelm Burmeister [Director of the DAAD], 28 August 1935, AA Pol. Arch., Stockholm, 336; cf. Löw 2013). A lecture at Lund by the orientalist Hans Heinrich Schaeder was severely criticized for being propagandistic in a way that was scholarly shoddy: it “lacked everything that has made German research world famous” and would only confirm the common misapprehension that German research had “given up on objectivity” (quoted in Widmalm 2016, p. 84).

As we have noted, the rhetoric of objectivity was popular also with Swedish academics, not least those writing in the RST journal, where it was constantly argued that developments in Germany must be treated objectively or neutrally (Lundell 2017). Herman Nilsson-Ehle explained, shortly after becoming chairman of the Association, that “he as a scientist had not become leader of this national association, unless its task had been to counter [...] the machinations against Germany in an objective and scientific manner” (quoted in Widmalm 1999, p. 259; cf. Lundell 2016, p. 277). When Hitler boycotted the Nobel Prize in 1937, because of the peace prize awarded by the Norwegian Parliament to Carl von Ossietzky, Sven Hedin bitterly complained that it should, in the future, be awarded by “Swedish men of whose impartiality and objectivity there can be no doubt, whatever party they belong to” (quoted in Widmalm forthcoming 2019). When students protested a visit by the biologist-philosopher Adolf Meyer-Abich to the agrarian university at Ultuna, Uppsala, in 1943, he and his hosts, several of whom were Nazi sympathizers, decried their inability to tell the difference between science and politics (Widmalm 2016, pp. 87–89). The direct cause of the protests was the shutdown of Oslo University by the Nazi authorities in December 1943, after which cultural exchange between Sweden and Germany actually would finally cease.

In a general sense, the Swedish case illustrates the structural preconditions for cultural exchange between Germany and other countries. Social networks and what is best described as an institutional system guided co-operation and other activities such as the exchange of lecturers or the bestowing of awards. There was nothing odd about this. The fact that Germany adhered to a system established before 1933 was part of the normalization process. Swedes participating in or promoting exchange with Germany would argue that politicizing was wrong and clouded judgement; from a position of neutrality, Germany should not be treated differently than other intellectually prominent nations. As we will see, these structural and rhetorical characteristics were typical of intellectual exchange between Germany and many other countries as well. At the same time, there were differences having to do with political circumstances, the partial overlap between individual and institutional initiatives, or – on the German side – a tangible tension between competing individuals and fractions among the Reich ministries or between party and government organizations. In short, networks and system were heterogeneous; the influence of organizations and individuals must be evaluated from case to case.



## Overview of the book

Normalization is – though often not labelled as such in the individual chapters – an interpretative framework for the book as a whole, evident e.g. in the discursive strategy of cultural policy to emphasize a-political objectivity and neutrality, in the attempts to establish international collaboration on an ethno-nationalist footing, and in the downplaying of extreme ideological positions. The following chapters give witness to the partial success of this strategy. Networks and institutions provided a politically sanitized rationality for collaboration that was supported, or at least deemed acceptable, by intellectuals in many countries. A measure of the strategy's success is the relative invisibility of the “Jewish question” or other pronounced anti-rational aspects of the Nazi world view in collaborative contexts.

The seeming contradiction of Nazi cultural policy – a renunciation of internationalism or even objectivity coupled with the promotion of international exchange through networks and institutions – is analysed in the chapter by Andrea Albrecht, Lutz Danneberg and Alexandra Skowronski. They point to “a series of semantic accommodations, such as substituting the notion *internationale Verständigung* (international understanding) by *zwischenvölkisches Verstehen* (understanding between peoples)”. Nazi ideologues like Alfred Rosenberg and Philipp Lenard substituted “objective” science, associated with e.g. Jewish cosmopolitanism, with *völkisch* “situatedness”. In the case of literature, classical music and film, such reinterpretations allowed for German participation or leadership in international exchange, and this was to some extent true also for the sciences (Martin 2016). What could seem like “international” collaboration outside of Germany and among internationally minded German academics could simultaneously be interpreted as “*zwischenvölkisch*” collaboration by Nazi ideologues.

Benjamin Martin's chapter traces the *völkisch* mindset behind Nazi ideas of visual art, seen as a transcendent, non-commercial, non-political reflection of the nation. Unlike literature, music and film, the visual arts were not organized along a corporatist inter-national system; they nevertheless played a vital role in cultural diplomacy aiming to build networks among foreign intellectuals and cultural producers. A depoliticized understanding of art – similar to that of objective or neutral science discussed elsewhere in the book – masked the ideological intent of various international contacts to redefine art as essentially national so that it was not to be “confused and undermined by the cacophony of democratic politics and cultural life”. Like Albrecht *et al.*, Martin points out that during the war, the Nazi strategy of promoting collaboration between distinctively national cultures was undermined, also among fascist allies, by an increasing tendency to emphasize German hegemony.

Institutional networks functioned, during the Nazi period, much like they had earlier, though they were more politicized than before the First World War. In fact, a model for the system of fascist-led corporatist international



organizations in the arts might have been that of the sciences – with the International Association of Academies established in 1899 and resurrected in 1919 as the IRC, creating a system of scientific “unions” organized by national academies. In the interwar period, international organizations or national organizations with an international orientation (like the academies) flourished, constituting an infrastructure for international exchange where Nazi Germany played an important part. To this system belonged various organizations promoting bilateral cultural exchange. Johannes Dafinger’s chapter is focused on the Nazi umbrella organization of such societies that were German-based, *Vereinigung zwischenstaatlicher Verbände*. They maintained academic, intellectual, cultural and informal political transnational networks on a large scale, thereby helping to shape a common discourse of an ethno-nationalist “New Europe”. Members of these organizations retrospectively often described them as “apolitical”. But evidence shows that they contributed to the process of normalizing authoritarian, anti-liberal, and anti-Semitic ideas.

A partial failure of Nazi cultural policy is exemplified in Hans-Joachim Bieber’s overview of German-Japanese scholarly exchange. Politically, academically, and not least militarily bonds between the two countries strengthened during the Nazi period, when fascism (broadly defined) was implemented also in Japan, although a deepening of relations in research and culture after the Axis was established was prevented by wartime conditions. Exchange between the two countries was promoted by a system of institutions, like the Japan Institute and the Japanese-German Cultural Institute (both bilateral), but it was quite asymmetrical, e.g. with an emphasis on Japanese studying in Germany and Germans lecturing in Japan, but not vice versa. Furthermore, Japanese academics’ reactions towards Nazism were largely negative, and sensitivity to racial issues was high.

The overlapping of social networks and the system of institutions is illustrated by the essential role played by certain individuals who were central to both. The Swedish trio Nilsson-Ehle, Hedin and von Euler has been mentioned; other examples are Richard Strauss among German and non-German composers and Ernst Rüdin among German and non-German eugenicists and psychiatrists. Matthias Berg’s chapter discusses Karl Brandt, since the mid-1920s the most influential German historian when it came to international relations. He was from 1932 chairman of the German Historians’ Association and from 1933 vice president of the International Historical Committee. Focussing on questions of competition, co-operation and collaboration, Berg uses Brandt as an empirical lens to analyse how international relations could be navigated by scholars who were simultaneously under attack from colleagues who had fully adopted the Nazi world view by denouncing internationalism.

The established science academies were of course also affected by the changing conditions for international relations brought on by the rise of Nazi Germany. Fernando Clara investigates the balancing act performed by the Portuguese Academy of Sciences in Lisbon vis-à-vis Germany by

focussing on how matters pertaining to German foreign membership were handled. A postwar self-image of neutrality characterized by collaboration with the Allies is contrasted with a more ambiguous reality. Between 1932 and 1945, there was an increase in German and Italian foreign membership that had no equivalent among other nations. This was an indication of the affinity between these regimes and that of Salazar. In science, these relations were upheld by overlapping social networks and institutions.

The system of scientific academies was by no means dominated by Germany. Accommodation to Nazi interests in this context was probably more common among smaller nations like Portugal. Helke Rausch however shows that accommodation took place also in the emerging scientific great power across the Atlantic. Focussing on the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Anthropology, Human Genetics, and Eugenics, she analyses the Rockefeller Foundation's scientific philanthropy in Germany, where it remained eager to offer support until the end of the 1930s. Rockefeller representatives were attracted by the idea of apolitical scientific excellence promoted by Nazi policy, and the technocratic vision of the totalitarian regime meshed well with the foundation's social engineering vision of modernity. This example shows, along with many of the book's case studies, that there was often a specific rationality informing Nazi collaboration that, depending on political viewpoints, could just as easily be seen as morally reprehensible. In the case of Rockefeller, adverse public opinion in the US led to a withdrawal from the German scene in the late 1930s.

An example of how social networks among academics with similar intellectual and ideological inclinations ran parallel and sometimes intersected with institutional systems is the network of the Germanophile and *völkisch*-nationalist Swiss historian Hektor Amman whose professional and political trajectory is the focus of Fabian Link's chapter. Already before 1933, Amman's network had promoted the legitimization of a German-dominated Europe. As experts of ethnic politics from various perspectives, its members willingly assisted the Nazi regime, and after the war, they continued to help each other's careers, influencing Germanophone academia long into the postwar period.

Another example of network-based normalization is given in Annika Berg's investigation of pro-Nazi propaganda in travel reports published by physicians in a leading Swedish medical journal. She shows that the editors published a disproportionate amount of reports from Germany and that these not only discussed medical matters but often contained political remarks, ranging from non-committal to enthusiastic. Critique was almost non-existent. The medical journal thus helped normalize a "pro-German" discourse by offering a media platform to a network of politically like-minded physicians whose views were hardly representative of the profession as a whole.

Cláudia Ninhos' chapter maps the increasingly intense relations between Nazi Germany and Portugal, especially network-based exchange in genetics.



This example illustrates that German cultural policy was by no means only a propaganda exercise but that an important rationale was to further knowledge transfer, e.g. through conference participation and internships. Ideological influence was simultaneously part of the bargain as Portuguese geneticists who participated in exchange with Germany tended to sympathize with the regime and, when back in Portugal, to disseminate Nazi ideals.

The intense development of higher education in Brazil during the Nazi period created plenty of cultural policy opportunities for Germany (until 1942 when Brazil joined the Allies) as well as other countries. André Felipe Cândido da Silva's discussion of policy relations concerning education shows how social, cultural and scientific events affected the formation of disciplines and institutions as well as individual careers. Many initiatives were run by German official and semi-official institutions, but informal networks played an important role. At the same time, the polycratic nature of the Nazi regime, with competing or even fighting Nazi and government agencies, caused problems, as did the persecution of Jewish scholars, many of whom took refuge in Brazil.

A theme that several contributions touch upon is that of historical revision. It is brought into focus in Pascal Germann's chapter on the relationship between Swiss and German genetics and eugenics, which questions an established narrative that the former had kept the latter at arm's length distance. Germann argues that Swiss genetics developed in partial alliance with Nazi eugenics. Rather than openly appearing as Nazi sympathizers, Swiss geneticists presented their enterprise as "neutral science" – like in Sweden, where political circumstances were similar, this approach was informed by the hallowed ideal of scientific objectivity as well as the political self-perception of a small and neutral country. On the one hand, collaboration followed the rationality of *Realpolitik*, a readiness to accept and exploit the new European power relations; on the other hand, ideological and scientific affinities were important as well, and Swiss geneticists frequently worked against international efforts to isolate Nazi eugenics.

Marició Janué i Miret's chapter exemplifies the ethno-nationalist tendency of German cultural policy, in this case promoted mainly by social networks. In order to help constitute a European New Order, German intellectuals portrayed the Spanish nation as one of the "pure" European cultures. By equating Catholicism with Christianity and a reformed Catholicism with fascism, a Francoist version of the concept *Hispanidad* was linked to the expansion of the cultural New Order also in Latin America. Spaniards were thus assigned a vital role vis-à-vis Anglo-Saxon and Bolshevik threats to German geostrategic interests. This exemplifies how ethno-nationalist internationalism worked in practice.

The question, if Nazi collaboration among intellectuals should simply be seen as a form of moral treason or if it should also be understood as rational behaviour given political as well as intellectual (including ideological) contexts

is highlighted in Mark Walker's chapter on "Copenhagen", the meeting between Werner Heisenberg and Niels Bohr in September 1941, famous because of Michael Frayn's eponymous play. Heisenberg had been lambasted as a "white Jew" by anti-Semitic physics but survived those attacks to become part of the Nazi nuclear programme and a cultural ambassador for the regime. No matter how we view the moral implications of Heisenberg's attempt to gather information about nuclear research outside of Germany, his mission followed the logic of German cultural policy. The meeting was one in a series of similar performances by Heisenberg. As an effective goodwill ambassador, since he did not spread obvious propaganda, he tried to entice natives (though failing in the case of Bohr) to co-operation controlled by DWI and other German organizations.

Susanne Heim addresses the question of morality head on in her discussion of the motives behind German researchers' co-operation with the regime. As a rule, she claims, scientists were not coerced into collaboration. They usually offered their scientific capacities in order to advance science as well as their own careers. This may be seen as an abdication from political responsibility of a different kind than the treason Benda discussed, which focussed on political activism. Heim claims that German scientists in general did not have to submit to Nazi ideology. Her description runs in parallel with Pamela M. Potter's analysis of art during the Nazi regime – as long as you did not actively dissent, or belonged to the wrong "race", you were given a pretty wide berth to carry on as usual, be it as a modernist architect or, like Heisenberg, a practitioner of "Jewish" theoretical physics. Heim argues that any judgement concerning "betrayal" must be based on explicit ethical standards imposed on science from the outside. Science itself has plenty of reason but no inherent morality, which makes talk of treason in Benda's sense, against moral obligations inherent in intellectual pursuits, meaningless.

### Concluding remarks

History never translates directly. This does not mean that there are no lessons to be learned (cf. Andersson and Tydén 2007). For example, in his *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (1992), Christopher Browning uncovers mechanisms that made drafted reservists – in many cases not at all followers of Nazi ideology – participate in the Holocaust without being compelled to do so. On a general level, Browning's analysis gives an indication of how extreme political violence can be understood. It is also true that a fair valuation of historical processes is necessary to provide guidance for the future in many areas, not least concerning those burning issues that are often (in Europe) labelled "grand challenges", of which racism including anti-Semitism is one. Historical research contributes a fund of knowledge that makes us better equipped to understand the present and plan for the future (Guldi and Armitage 2014); in a very real sense, we have only historic knowledge to rely on.



This book deals with topics that have never been completely out of date and whose significance is again on the rise. Does this mean that there is a continuity between ideas among the radical right concerning for example nation and race in the 1930s and today? Is there an essence of fascism that historical research can identify so that we are better equipped to respond when it is coming back, or is it simply wrong to talk about fascism other than as a historical phenomenon? Such questions informed an animated discussion in Sweden in 2014 when the Social Democratic Prime Minister Stefan Löfven stated that the populist right-wing party Sverigedemokraterna (the Sweden Democrats) is neo-fascist – a claim founded on Roger Griffin’s (1991) definition of fascism as an ultra-nationalist call for national rebirth. Critics argued that such parallels are useless as they ignore important and historically specific features of fascism, like corporatism, racism, or totalitarianism (Björkman *et al.* 2016b, pp. 27–28). Christopher Browning (2018) has commented that a more appropriate term than “fascism” to describe recent developments in the US and elsewhere would be “illiberal democracy” – a label associated with European developments in, especially, Hungary.

It is clear that right-wing extremism of the modern kind not only relies on nationalism (“ultra” or not) promoted as national revival and that it constitutes a frontal attack on mainstream intellectual pursuits, be it the internationalized art scene, journalism or academic research and expertise in e.g. climatology (especially in the US), economy (*vide* the Brexit movement) and of course history.<sup>3</sup> If normalization of these phenomena will succeed in the US or Europe is an open question (for an argument that it might, see Bershidsky 2018).

This book makes no claim to advance the discussion about the relationship between today’s situation and the Nazi period. What we offer is rather a historical mirror that has special value because of its geographic and cultural plurality. There is no doubt that the intellectuals participating in collaboration or exchange with German colleagues and organizations during the Third Reich (or financed them, as with the Rockefeller Foundation) knew that they supported an antidemocratic and racist system. They often pointed out that precisely those aspects of the Third Reich were unfortunate and should not be imitated in their own countries. At the same time, they were frequently promoting the normalization of fascism by calling for an “understanding” of the “new Germany” since its excesses were a reaction to the conditions brought about by Versailles (broadly condemned not only among conservatives) and the failures of Weimar (and hence of democracy). Among such people, a common rhetorical turn was to deplore Nazi anti-Semitism, while at the same time pointing out that the great influence of Jews in Germany made it understandable.

The Swedish professor of political science and pugnacious left-wing intellectual Herbert Tingsten (1936) proposed that Nazi ideology was in large part the result of pragmatic considerations propped up by ad hoc intellectual legitimization, which is reasonable enough. Those who endorsed the anti-democratic

modernization project of German or Italian fascism similarly often maintained that concrete results were more important than general principles. The hopes for positive effects of national “rebirth” and economic growth trumped humanity and democracy.

## Notes

- 1 Already in 1934, over a thousand physicians had signed a petition against giving the prominent Jewish gynaecologist Bernhard Zondek a work permit with the result that he left Sweden, and later moved to Palestine. Högberg 2013, pp. 116–118.
- 2 The book was banned in Germany, however, because Hedin mildly criticized Nazi anti-Semitic policies.
- 3 In August 2018, two films premiered in Sweden (with English subtitles) and the US in what appears to have been a co-ordinated action to discredit the mainstream left – Social Democracy and the Democratic party – by arguing that it originally was a form of Nazism. The Swedish film, “One People, One Party”, sponsored by the Sweden Democrats, was published on the web ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=UXPhLXuJ90I](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UXPhLXuJ90I), consulted 28 September 2018) whereas Denish D’Souza’s “The Death of a Nation” was shown in regular movie theatres (trailer: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=UXPhLXuJ90I](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UXPhLXuJ90I), consulted 28 September 2018). For a discussion of the latter movie, see Bromwich (2018).

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## 2 “Zwischenvölkisches Verstehen”

### Theory and practice of knowledge transfer, 1933–1945

*Andrea Albrecht, Lutz Danneberg & Alexandra Skowronski*

The concept of science that was propagated in Germany between 1933 and 1945 is in itself highly heterogeneous and was heavily debated even among the spokesmen of National Socialist science policy. Nevertheless, a critical attitude towards the “internationality” of science was one of the key principles of National Socialism. In his text on the *Freiheit der Wissenschaft* (Freedom of science), Alfred Rosenberg (1935, p. 72) announced that there neither was nor had ever been an international science. In the same year, the historian Ulrich Kahrstedt (cited in Wegeler 1996, pp. 367–368) from Göttingen denounced the participation of German scientists at international conferences with harsh words, “We renounce international science, we renounce the international republic of letters, we renounce research for research’s sake”, and subsequently advertised a research programme relating solely to the “Germans”. The contemporary scientific community condemned this self-exclusion and considered it an attack on the “White International of Science” (Needham 1941, p. 21) and “a drastic rejection of internationalism” (McGill 1940, p. 17).

The critical attitude towards internationality did not, however, lead to an actual discontinuation of international scientific exchange under National Socialism. The majority of Nazi science politicians as well as scientists remaining in Germany deplored the country’s isolation from international research and emphasized the scientific as well as economic necessity of transnational academic co-operations. The editors of the journal *Hochschule und Ausland/Geist der Zeit* (University and Foreign Countries/Spirit of the Time), for example, stated, “The spirit of the people is not an isolated spirit, neither isolated from the people nor from other peoples” (Burmeister and Scuria 1937, p. 238). A cursory glance at German scientific journals and newspapers reveals indeed that these co-operations were extensive and multifaceted. Even Nazi ideologues such as Ernst Krieck (1936a, p. 26), who had argued against the traditional scientific standards of universality, objectivity and presuppositionlessness (*Voraussetzungslosigkeit*) in various publications, emphasized at the same time that German science would not take “the path of so-called autarky” but wanted to remain in a “*relation of giving and receiving*” with “*all the other parts of the European family of peoples*”.



The tension between a practiced and sometimes even openly declared international orientation of scientific research on the one hand and a renunciation of the internationality of science on the other led to a series of semantic accommodations, such as substituting the notion *internationale Verständigung* (international understanding) by *zwischenvölkisches Verstehen* (understanding between peoples). In a speech on 30 January 1937, Hitler (1937, p. 82), while at the same time justifying a society of racial-anti-Semitic exclusion, envisaged that the National Socialist “revolution of knowledge” would not lead to an “estrangement of the people” but to “true mutual understanding”. In the same year, Theodor Wilhelm (1937, p. 313), Nazi-conformist referee of the *Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst* (DAAD, German Academic Exchange Service) and editor of the *Internationale Zeitschrift für Erziehung* (International Journal for Education) co-edited by Alfred Baeumler, proclaimed,

We [...] agree that “international understanding” does not dissolve the nations, but that the road towards it leads through the peoples. The German language expresses this simple truth through its use of language, by saying “zwischenvölkisches Verstehen” instead of “internationale Verständigung”.

The notion of *zwischenvölkisches Verstehen* was meant to highlight the break with cultural and scientific policies of the *Systemzeit* (the time of the system, i.e. of the Weimar Republic) and especially the reconciliation policy of Gustav Stresemann (Düwell 1976), foreign minister from 1923 until his death in 1929. Moreover, the *völkisch* ideologues suspected, anyway, the concept of the “international” to be related to Bolshevism/Marxism, Liberalism/Capitalism/Americanism, French Universalism, Catholicism (which was considered to be supranational) and to the emigrants and/or Judaism. By contrast, the notion *zwischenvölkisches Verstehen* was meant – despite its conceptual vagueness – to accommodate the so-called *völkisch* principle as well as to underpin the new Nazi-compliant practices of scientific and cultural co-operation. This was not, however, a simple surface phenomenon concerning propagandistic rhetoric; these ideologemes deeply permeated the contemporary debates on concepts of science and scholarship and infiltrated in particular disciplines susceptible to ideologies such as literary studies and philosophy.

In this chapter, we will outline the core of this debate that revolved around the *völkisch* bonds of science, before engaging with the theoretical conceptualizations of *zwischenvölkisches Verstehen* on the basis of several case studies. Then we will trace how ethno-pluralistic concepts were gradually transformed into concepts of hegemonial transfer of knowledge in accordance with the German war and expansion policy, leaving the intended reconciliation of politics and science, *völkisch* principle and epistemic transnationality to fail in theory as well as in practice. We will

conclude with some preliminary thoughts on the practical implications of these changes in the approach to internationality as they are reflected in scientific periodicals.

### The *völkisch* bonds of science

The ethno-pluralistically based concept of a science with *völkisch* bonds identified conceptualizations of science that were universal, neutral and pre-suppositionless with the “claim to power of an abstract intellect” (Rust 1936, pp. 14–15, 22) that ought to be rejected as a “construction” (Krieck 1936a, p. 25) due to liberal, Marxist, rationalistic-French (Scurla 1934a, p. 4) and especially Jewish groups. The Nazi physicist Philipp Lenard for instance emphasized in his *Deutsche Physik* (German Physics) that whoever spoke about the “internationality of natural sciences” today “probably sub-consciously” referred to “Jewish sciences” (Lenard 1936, p. IX). National Socialism thereby breached a core aspect of traditional concepts of science, according to which the validity of knowledge claims is unaffected by certain qualities of their carrier, their collective background, or even certain qualities of their genesis, and knowledge claims rather derive their epistemic value precisely through their degree of transnational or universal validity.

This non-situatedness (*Standortlosigkeit*) (Scurla 1938, p. 16) in objective science was to be substituted with a specific situatedness (*Standortgebundenheit*) of scientific thought in National Socialism, namely a correlation between genesis and validity of knowledge claims justified “scientifically” through racial biology. As a consequence, knowledge could only claim a certain epistemic value if its origins were *arteigen* (species-specific) and/or if it was adequate to the *Art* (species) (Danneberg and Schernus 2003, pp. 47–49). There were occasional attempts to diffuse the conflict with established scientific standards by restricting the influence of racial-biology to the genesis of knowledge, and thus still preserve its universal validity. The journalist and philosopher Hans-Joachim Flechtner (1934, p. 117) thus proposed,

If a race [...] is especially well suited to ask a certain kind of questions [...], then this race [...] may very well be suited to take on the valid investigation into this complex of problems for all of mankind.

In general, though, the National Socialists expected the racial and *völkisch* bonds to also hold true in the sphere of scientific knowledge. Herbert Scurla (1938, p. 16), teaching at the *Deutsche Hochschule für Politik* (German Academy for Politics) in Berlin and working as a special referee for eastern matters (*Ostfragen*) at the Reichsministerium für Wissenschaft, Erziehung und Volksbildung (REM, Reich Ministry of Science, Education, and Culture), stated accordingly, that the pledge to *völkisch* bonds had “delivered the mind from its chains and again replaced ‘objectivity’ with truthfulness as basic prerequisite for all research”.



This recurring emphasis on truthfulness (*Wahrhaftigkeit*) – put forward not only by Scurla – was not an epistemic quality or criterion of valid knowledge (as truth or productiveness) but an ethical quality of the knowledge carrier, assigned to him not individually but as a member of a group of people defined by *völkisch* characteristics. The ethnic and biological qualities of the knowledge carrier were thus given priority over the epistemic qualities of knowledge. The affiliation with a *völkisch* collective of people could not be chosen freely. The only people free to choose were “intellectuals without roots” (Scurla 1934a, p. 10), representatives of a “free-floating intellect” (Rust 1936, p. 15), “people that feel at home everywhere and nowhere because they racially and nationally belong everywhere and nowhere” (van Essen 1941, p. 181) – descriptions that generally meant Jewish intellectuals. The “truthful scientist”, however, acknowledged his *völkisch* bonds and viewed himself as an individual existentially committed to his race and *Volk* and therefore, as Alfred Rosenberg (1935) set forth, only seeking out “freedom of science” within the scope of his *völkisch* bonds. The racial, *völkisch*, and cultural differences could thus also be portrayed as differences in the way of “feeling and thinking”, as distinctions between certain types or patterns of thinking and forms of mind (*Geistformen*) (Burmeister and Scurla 1937, p. 237). Those could then again be consolidated as racially, *völkisch*, or culturally determined scientific disciplines – German Physics, German Psychology, German History of Philosophy – and contrasted with allegedly Jewish or foreign formations.

But what should contact between various self-contained “individualities of people” and autonomous neighbouring countries look like (Scurla 1937, p. 573)? How could co-operation and scientific exchange between races, peoples, and cultures be structured under the premise of ethno-pluralism, the *völkisch* principle, and a priority of race and worldview (*Weltanschauung*)? Was Robert K. Merton (1942 cited Merton 1973, pp. 272–273) right in suspecting that “the exponents of a culture which abjures universal standards still feel obliged to pay lip service to this value in the realm of science. Universalism is deviously affirmed in theory and suppressed in practice”? In the contemporary literature, those questions were discussed both within specific disciplines – especially those dealing with the *Artfremdem* (foreign to the species) such as racial biology, foreign language studies and foreign studies – and comprehensively in philosophy. The latter viewed itself innately responsible for matters of hermeneutics and “uniquely qualified to give utterance” to the specific racial and ethnic mindset, the specific “spirit of race and the people” (Haering 1943, preface). We will show how wide the range of answers to these questions was even within positions clearly impregnated by ideology and propaganda through outlining – in necessary brevity – the contemplations of the race researcher Ludwig Ferdinand Clauß (1892–1974, member of the NSDAP from 1933), the philosopher Wolfgang Erxleben (1911–1945, member of the NSDAP from 1933), the sociologist Hans Freyer (1887–1969, not a party member, but sympathetic to National Socialism) and the philosopher Theodor Haering (1884–1964,



member of the NSDAP from 1937). All four dealt with the challenge of modelling interethnic exchange under the conditions of National Socialism – or in hermeneutical terminology: how the *völkisch* and racial “other” could be the cause and subject of a process of understanding while at the same time preserving their own *völkisch* and racial “self”. It goes without saying that these contemplations were not directly reflected in practice. They do however indicate a specific set of problems linked to the concept of science in National Socialism that was perceived as acute at the time.

### Concepts of *zwischenvölkisches Verstehen*

The race researcher Ludwig Ferdinand Clauß (1940, p. 13), who had engaged with problems of understanding in many of his writings, described “Verstehen” (understanding) as a process “between soul and soul” constitutive for a community, whereas “Verständigung” (understanding) “about outward appearances” was possible between all peoples. While “Verständigung” remained superficial and did not involve the whole person, even though it was conceived as universal, the emphatic notion of “Verstehen” characterized a deeper encounter involving not only the “shell” but the core of a person or group.

Despite the notion that unmediated, “first-hand” understanding was only possible on the grounds of essential similarities – as the interrelation of understanding and community implied – Clauß tried to develop a scientific concept of understanding transcending the limitations of unmediated comprehension among *Artverwandten* (related species). Through scientific research, “Verstehen” could also become possible with the “entirely alien”, whose “meaning” one could extrapolate and thus understand “secondhand”: “To study a [foreign] race commands us to recognize the meaning of its bodily shape; a meaning that can only be understood through the shape of its soul” (Clauß 1934, p. 45). The study of a foreign human race did not exhaust itself in outward observations and measurements – as for instance those found in Alfred Brehm’s observations of animals (Clauß 1937a, p. 114). In addition to a “study of the racial body” (*Rassenkörperkunde*) one needed, according to Clauß, also a “study of the racial soul” (*Rassenseelenkunde*) (Hunke 1936, p. 86) that was able to “see” types and forms (*Gestalt-Ideen*) within an individual in order to derive from them the unchangeable “laws of racial styles” (Clauß 1937a, pp. 115–119). The method used by this form of psychoanthropology Clauß (1937b, p. 26) called the “method of co-living or mimic method” (*Methode des Mitlebens oder mimische Methode*). It allowed for a “co-living understanding” (*mitlebendes Verstehen*), an actual partaking in the everyday life of a foreign culture, something Clauß (1937a, p. 113) himself had undertaken repeatedly with Arab Bedouin tribes. By the conscientious enactment of a role, the fieldworker would gain intimate insight into a foreigner’s “way of experiencing” (*ibid.*) and thus also into its racial style (*Rassenstil*), albeit without himself being changed by the experience, as he would have been in the case of an unmediated understanding of a community.

Within the internal logic of Clauß's writing, the method of co-living understanding enabled individuals to come in contact with and learn from the "other", while at the same time keeping their own "self" unaffected by the contact. As such, the method was not only susceptible to promote a superficial rapprochement, it was also characterized by its lack in reciprocity. Essentially, Clauß was not concerned with interethnic exchange, but with a scientifically regulated, "understanding" view of an object, that alone a "Nordic researcher" could master. This was always governed by the researcher's own interest in the other. Clauß (1940, pp. 101–103; Gray 2004, pp. 277–279) emphasized scientific principles such as neutrality and value-freedom, but he also justified value-judgements based on ethnicity and race as a potentially required (political) decision of the group. In the matter of Jewish racial style, he took a Nordic point of view against the (contemporary) Jew, whose specific racial mixture would inevitably repel a "Nordic German" (Clauß 1937b, p. 27) and make co-living understanding impossible.

Seen from the perspective of the history of ideas, the notion of understanding something foreign may have been less practically oriented than in racial theory but was hardly any more consistent. Wolfgang Erxleben's dissertation *Erlebnis, Verstehen und geschichtliche Wahrheit* (Experience, Understanding, and Historical Truth), completed in 1937 under Alfred Baeumler, might serve as an example. Erxleben, an employee at the Amt Rosenberg, did not stop at criticizing the mimic-theatrical methods for understanding foreign individuals and peoples propagated by Clauß among others. The "scholar of humanities" could not be an "actor and therein see the fulfilment of his task [...]: Faust cannot be played by a Chinese, it would thus become a Chinese Faust but not the one by our German poet!" (Erxleben 1937, p. 84). Erxleben countered this by what one could call a *völkisch* revision of Dilthey's theory of hermeneutics. Dilthey, he alleged, had naively proceeded from the assumption that all people are equal and had therefore failed to provide an adequate "notion of otherness" (Erxleben 1937, p. 82) as well as an ethnic notion of community (*ibid.*, p. 171). Even Dilthey's ground-breaking attempts to use "types" as a way of differentiating and particularizing mankind had in the end created only the illusion of a "universal unbound knowledge" (*standpunktlose[s] Erkennen*) (*ibid.*, p. 159). Erxleben instead adopted a model of "essentially differing types" whose "differences cannot be resolved through a universal human nature" (*ibid.*, p. 167), but had to be conceptualized as incommensurable racially and ethnically determined variables. Comparisons between those variables were restricted to formal recognition, that is, the contact with something of foreign type could only lead to logical judgements, but not to an *understanding* of the other. As Erxleben (1937, p. 170) pointed out, the truly other had to be excluded as something "our mind was simply unable to understand". Emphatic understanding would always remain limited to a community bound by blood/race and history. It was the only way in which Erxleben could unite historical hermeneutics as developed by Dilthey (and others) with the



ideological guidelines of his time. Hence, a theory of understanding no longer set forth the possibilities of understanding others but rather delineated its strict boundaries, which were consequently spelled out in racist terms by Erxleben and other ideologists.

In contrast to Clauß and Erxleben, Hans Freyer was actually concerned with *two-sided* academic exchange. He, however, focused primarily on historically and culturally related peoples who Erxleben would also have approved. As he worked as a visiting scholar in the German history of culture at the University of Budapest and from 1941 onwards oversaw its German Scientific Institute, he sought to establish a *zwischenvölkisch* “scientific dialogue” (Freyer 1937, p. 11) between Germany and the South-Eastern European countries and thus consolidate their political alliances. Like Clauß, he distinguished between *Verstehen* and *Verständigung*: While *Verständigung* dealt with an objective comparison of interests, *Verstehen* was understood to be a process of mutual recognition that severed the “spell of isolation” without “dissolving singularity” (ibid., p. 5). Science above all had the potential and the task to structure our everyday intuitive acts of understanding through systematic and methodical research, thus also uncovering still hidden “secret affinities” (ibid., p. 10) that might remain invisible to the untrained eye – the “affinity” (Wesensverwandtschaft) between Germany and the young “peoples of South-Eastern Europe” for instance (ibid., p. 9).

Freyer’s (1941) commitment to a “cross-border partnership” and to a “German–Hungarian scientific exchange” (Freyer 1942) perfectly matched the economic and political plans for Europe under National Socialism. His theoretical writings on *zwischenvölkisch* exchange subtly mirror these circumstances as well. Freyer (1937, p. 6) draws on an ethos of “*Ritterlichkeit*” (chivalry) which was probably introduced into the debates by the political scientist and later emigrant Arnold Bergsträsser in 1930. Bergsträsser (1930, p. 90) had used it to mark a politically underdetermined realm of academic encounter that was characterized by moments of “cosmopolitan contact”, a deeper “kind of understanding”, and “mutual respect” (p. 78). Freyer (1937, p. 13), however, used the term as a substitute for rules in dealing with foreign nations that were officially missing since Germany had withdrawn from the League of Nations: Since the “freedom between peoples [...] is not a system of abstract legal norms”, and since there no longer existed an “international” ruling for *zwischenvölkisch* dealings with the unfathomable or only partly comprehensible “other”, Freyer understood the notion of *Ritterlichkeit* as an individually guaranteed ethos which alone was supposed to be able to constrain a violent enforcement of our own understanding. *Ritterlichkeit* in his sense stands for an incorporated notion of heroic decorum and manly honour. The chivalrous encounter with an “other” presumes a symmetrical and mutual relation of respect and acknowledgement, which makes it possible to accentuate not only one’s own autonomy, but also that of the counterpart. In this way, an “understanding between peoples” could be



conceived as an interrelation. As Freyer (1937, p. 12) notes, “The approach of understanding is not sentimental [...], but chivalrous. It does not dissolve the counterpart’s individuality, but rather comes to its comprehension and acknowledgement”. But, as Freyer (*ibid.*, p. 5) also emphasizes, understanding is not compatible with “softness, indulgence, bonhomie, renouncing one’s own essence”, and thereby effectively excluded virtues of empathy and humanity. *Ritterlichkeit* in this sense was an attitude susceptible to turn towards battle and violence as soon as the encounter with others affected one’s personal or *völkisch* honour. Despite their reciprocity, Freyer’s ethics of *Ritterlichkeit* always contained a potential threat (see also von Freytagh-Loringhoven 1941, p. 45). While still conceived of as conciliatory in early programmatic statements, international cultural exchange gradually became an antagonistic form of encounter. Already Bergsträsser (1930, p. 75) had emphasized a “stronger fulfilment of the own nature” (*stärkere Erfüllung des eigenen Wesens*) instead of a “rapprochement” of nations (p. 87): “Understanding means to distance oneself from the other just as much as to absorb him” (p. 77). After 1933, a dialectic relation between identity and understanding of the other was repeatedly postulated. For instance, Axel Seeberg (1939, p. 284), lecturer at the Hochschule für Politik (Policy College) and referee of the Auswärtiges Amt (Foreign Office), proclaims in 1939 that the “*zwischen-völkisch* work” did not result in internationally levelling (in today’s terms: effects of globalization), but in “strengthening of the *völkisch* individualities”.

The statements became more and more aggressive. Already in 1934, the Romanicist Karl Epting (1934, pp. 35–36), director of the DAAD office in Paris and confidant of Ribbentrop, stated that one “had to venture meeting the foreign” but that instead of talking of “intellectual collaboration” one ought to talk of “intellectual dispute”, so, the “purpose of international conferences and research travel” lay in an “intellectual team competition” (*Mannschaftskampf*). Herbert Scurla (1934a, pp. 9–10), too, saw a “strong will” as precondition for “*zwischenvölkische[s] Verstehen[]*”, which mainly ought to concern itself with “differences”; during the process of understanding, “falling for the foreign” had to be resisted. The counterparts stood “face to face” with each other (*ibid.*, p. 11).

Until the beginning of the war, such *völkisch* statements at least still “acknowledged the equality and autonomy of all peoples” (Scurla 1934b, p. 41); scientific exchange was also understood and promoted as a bilateral endeavour. The own *arteigen* culture however was seen as something monological, geared towards shielding and increasing the own identity and driven by a gradually more aggressive self-confidence and sense of mission that culminated in the *Kriegseinsatz der Geisteswissenschaften* (war deployment of the humanities) (Hausmann 1998). This involvement was accompanied by conceptualizations of a hegemonic transfer of knowledge that replaced the proclaimed interrelation and reciprocity with a notion of unidirectional influence.

## Hegemonic transfer of knowledge during the war

Early on, many programmatic writings showcase a growing sense of superiority by the Germans: Ernst Krieck (1936b, p. 25) raised the “youthful German Science’s claim to leadership over the other sciences of the world” as early as 1936. And according to Oswald Kroh (1938, p. 14), military psychologist and member of the NSDAP, in 1938, it could “hardly be doubted any longer” that “Nordic humanity” had in fact founded “the whole structure of science”. At the latest, the beginning of the German military conquest and the attempts to expand the German territory – the occupation of Czechoslovakia in March 1939, followed by the invasion of Poland in September – exposed the guarantees of self-determination for foreign countries as “national cultural propaganda” (Scuria 1934a, p. 5). The territorial expansion now called for a new choice of words in dealing with *zwischenvölkisch* contacts. To that end, Theodor Haering (1943, p. 32) for instance, having proclaimed German supremacy in several writings already in the early 1930s and taking part in the *Kriegseinsatz* of philosophy, relied on the “totalitarian character of German philosophy”, i.e. the purported superior German proficiency in hermeneutics. Re-evaluating the traditional topoi of *Ausländerei* and *Nachahmungssucht* (the idea that German philosophy was only an imitation of “foreign” philosophy and, therefore, had to be less valued), he saw the essential characteristics of the German “spirit of the people” in a comprehensive universality. According to Haering (1943, p. 38), Germans would totalize any “foreign ideas” (*Fremdgut*), and thus free them “from their original one-sidedness and exaggeration by integrating them into the thereby strengthened totality of the German intuition [*Schau*]”. On these grounds, it was easily assumed “that this German way could potentially be the only one called not only to stand *beside* other peoples, but to stand *above* them all as their conciliation and unification” (*ibid.*, p. 22). At the same time, Haering (1941, pp. 3–4) believed that the apparent “similarity of international thinking and writing” throughout the history of European culture was superficial and that beneath “utter foreignness” there was to be found a “mind of our mind” – a mind to be reconstructed through the study of culture. The monologic and closed nature of each *völkisch* culture could thus also be maintained in meetings across national borders; encountering an “other” became equivalent to encountering one’s own primordial nature and was thus turned into a self-encounter.

Another example of philosophical reflections being deeply infused with scraps of ideology is the case of the above-mentioned editor of the *Internationale Zeitschrift für Erziehung* Theodor Wilhelm: In his propagandistic piece *Europa als Kulturgemeinschaft* (Europe as cultural community) published during the war, he made a case against international critics of a “new European order” by proclaiming that the substitution of “French-English supremacy” with “German” supremacy was at the same time replacing a bad, artificial dominance with a good, natural one (Wilhelm 1943, p. 152).



The cultural and propagandistic influence attributed to France and Britain supposedly led to a foreign domination, whereas German influence strengthened the autochthonous and, as Wilhelm (*ibid.*, p. 153) puts it, led to the “fertilization of the indigenous” as well as the “awakening of national creativity” on the side of the cultural recipient as well. For Wilhelm (*ibid.*, p. 154), this was substantiated by the handling of Jews: For other countries such as Romania, the “example of a totalitarian National Socialist state under Adolf Hitler [...] became the best incentive [...] to free oneself from the yoke of Western Jewishness as well”. The systematic murder of Eastern European Jews was thus understood as the result of a transfer of German “knowledge”.

Other “successes” of the German expansionist policy were taken as a factor of *zwischenvölkisch* contact by German philosophers and scientists, too. As early as 1935, the physicist Pascual Jordan (1935, pp. 57–59) had identified war as a “trial” for the development of scientific thought and even promoted the notion of “*scientific objectivity*” despite the ideological reservations against it: “*The differences between German and French mathematics are no more essential than the differences between German and French machine guns*”, he observed, and promoted the recognition of “supranational validity”. In the face of Germany’s military success, Haering (1943, p. 18), too, advertised pure decisionism: only the “judge’s chair of practical success” was of relevance. And according to Paul Ritterbusch (1942, p. 7), war was “the sole righteous judge” and constituted a “test for all peoples” resulting in a “true order of value and precedence”. This held true not only in reference to the military but to the intellectual German supremacy as well: “*The war can, therefore, be seen as a mere battle between naked realities, but has also to be understood as an intellectual dispute*” (Ritterbusch 1939, p. 490). Even though it was officially prohibited since June 1941 to reflect “on future forms of the cohabitation of peoples”, the flow of manifests and phantasms of all kinds towards a “New Europe” under German rule was unstoppable in the face of military success. Proceeding from the “requirements of the current battle”, a confident “outlook for the future path of German Science” prevailed (cited in Kluge 1955, p. 269) – for example by the Nazi-affiliated economist Josef Ammelounx in 1943. The war was a further “trial” of science – a trial that would ultimately lead to the propagation of German culture throughout Europe and throughout the world (Ammelounx 1943, p. 13).

With the intent to further this German “propagation”, travels abroad and numerous invitations of international guest researchers were supported; bi- and international conferences were organized or at least intensively prepared – the Internationaler Weltkongress der Germanisten for instance. German scientists took part in international conferences; exchange programmes for students and teachers were promoted (Impekoven 2012); foreigners were awarded honorary doctorates and honorary degrees from abroad were accepted, memberships in international associations were maintained, international academies and German institutes abroad were



founded (Hausmann 2001); cultural-propagandistic bilateral friendship associations and *Kulturabkommen* (cultural agreement) were supported (Barbian 1992), and a number of bilateral or trilateral scientific collaborations and co-operations were promoted (Albrecht and Skowronski 2016; Hachtmann 2017). A number of journals with explicit transnational and international focus adapted to the political conditions or were newly founded. They do not only contain numerous programmatic reflections on the topic, but they are also able to give some indication about the implications conformist theories of *zwischenvölkisch* co-operation and collaboration had in practice.

### ***Zwischenvölkisches Verstehen* in the mirror of scientific periodicals**

Few journals bear witness to the transition from the *internationale Verständigung* to the *zwischenvölkisches Verstehen* as prominently as the monthly *Hochschule und Ausland*; its subtitle was changed in a telling way several times: The *Monatsschrift für Kulturpolitik und internationale geistige Zusammenarbeit* (monthly journal for international intellectual collaboration) (1932 and 1933) became *Monatsschrift für Kulturpolitik und zwischenstaatliche geistige Zusammenarbeit* (monthly journal for cultural policy and interstate intellectual collaboration) in 1934, shortly thereafter the *Monatsschrift für deutsche Kultur und zwischenvölkische geistige Zusammenarbeit* (monthly journal for German Culture and *zwischenvölkisch* intellectual collaboration), until it was completely renamed into *Geist der Zeit – Wesen und Gehalt der Völker* (spirit of our time – essence and body of peoples) in 1937. This journal, thematically designed for multifarious contacts abroad, and as a voice of the DAAD, remained faithful to its political mission after 1933, with sustained efforts for *Auslandsnummern* (special issues on foreign countries) and thematic priorities on “foreign studies” in order to further the promotion of German particularity by strengthening the differentiation of peoples. In this setting, it was possible for selected scientists from abroad to voice their opinions and facilitate the impression of a *zwischenvölkisch* debate on an equal footing. Similar patterns can be observed in the political monthlies *Volk und Reich* and *Volk im Werden* as well as the scientific news outlets *Geistige Arbeit* and *Forschungen und Fortschritte*; the last two having early on dedicated themselves to the policy of *zwischenvölkisches Verstehen* (Schriftleitung 1934, p. 1). Even in publications funded by the Reichspropagandaministerium (Reich Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda), for example the *Europäischer Wissenschafts-Dienst* whose primary goal was to help propagate scientific achievements of German Science, representatives of more than twenty different countries were allowed to publish during its existence from 1941 to 1944.

Nevertheless, it seems to have been challenging to include foreign voices in the German *völkisch* monologue: At least in contrast to the Weimar Republic, contributions from abroad were scarce in philosophical or interdisciplinary scientific German periodicals, articles in foreign languages an

exception. One of these exceptions regarding international contributions appears to be Rudolf Eucken's *Tatwelt: Zeitschrift für Erneuerung des Geisteslebens*, where the number of articles from abroad remained relatively high even after 1933. But also in specialized journals – in classical philology, global economy studies and pedagogy, the quota of contributions from abroad remained considerably high. One example is the afore mentioned *Internationale Zeitschrift für Erziehung*, co-edited by Alfred Baeumler, which was explicitly designed to be trilateral and addressed an international public (until the late 1930s with a strong focus on the US). Even though the number of international contributions dropped drastically during its last years of publication until 1944, up to 1942, it published numerous French and English – later also Italian – articles in their original language and in translation. It furthermore included reports of international conferences and German or international educational programmes, international accounts and comments on Germany's education system, and statements on international understanding.

A very different development can be observed in the case of the multilingual journal *Logos: Internationale Zeitschrift für Philosophie der Kultur*, which published German, Russian and Italian articles. October 1933 was the last issue published with the subtitle it had used for more than 20 years. From 1935 onwards, it was published as *Zeitschrift für Deutsche Kulturphilosophie*, a title that came together with a new editorial board cleared from any suspicion of Jewish origin (Kramme 1996, pp. 99–112). As the new editors, the philosopher Hermann Glockner and the law scholar Karl Larenz (1935, pp. 1–2), stated in the introduction that they did not want “to isolate” themselves “from the intellectual exchange with other peoples”. However, they rejected “the pale ghost of an international philosophy of culture”, instead engaging in philosophical projects rooted in “the uniquely fertile and life-giving soil of *völkisch* specificity”. Larenz succinctly summarized the new direction in December 1933 in a letter to the publisher Oskar Siebeck (cited in Kramme 1996, p. 105): “In accordance with National Socialism the task was to substitute the internationality of science with the nurturing of rapports with peoples that were racially and spiritually related [*artverwandt und geistesverwandt*]”. Nonetheless, contributions from abroad remained an exception, which might not come as a surprise in light of Glockner's (1935, p. 39) statement that the journal primarily ought to “strengthen the intellectual backbone of German philosophy, heighten its self-confidence and augment its pride”.

## Concluding remarks

We would like to conclude that the maintenance of internationality, even in the form of a hegemonic depravation or a mere facade of internationality, was of essential importance when it comes to the self-perception of German scientists. This was true not only for those scientists who accepted the ideological guidelines or those who were willing to make concessions to the



regime. Conformist theories and practices of *zwischenvölkisch* collaboration also allowed scientists who adapted only superficially and selectively to National Socialism or tried to evade politics altogether to uphold a certain appearance of “normal” scientific life. The degree of intellectual and publicist effort made to theoretically reconcile the political *völkisch* principle with the transnational principle of science – as our reconstructions have outlined to some extent – is remarkable. Especially disciplines susceptible to ideologies such as German language studies and philosophy were strongly influenced in their choice of subject and their research goals by theories of *zwischenvölkisch* transfer of knowledge and culture. One example is the studies seeking to establish a “German line of thinking and feeling” – large-scale projects with the aim to erect a new racially and *völkisch* codified tradition in which numerous German scholars of the humanities participated between 1933 and 1945 (Danneberg 2012). Similarly remarkable is the comprehensive practical commitment of scientists and science politicians to establishing, maintaining and propagandistically exploiting the *zwischenvölkisch* exchange: journals stressed achievements of German scientists in foreign countries as explicitly as those of foreign researchers in the Third Reich.

Prizes also bear witness to the political expectations attached to the notion of *zwischenvölkisch* – for instance, the Preis für wissenschaftliche Förderung zwischenvölkischer Geistesbeziehungen (price for the scientific promotion of *zwischenvölkisch* spiritual relationships) that was established in 1939 by the Deutsche Akademie (1941, p. 507) in order to honour individual achievements “illuminating cultural relations between Germans and other peoples”. Even though the focus on foreign countries naturally shifted away from France, England and the US towards Southern and Eastern European countries, once the war began, and even though international contacts became more and more restricted to bilateral ones, scientists could still adhere to the illusion of being part of the international scientific community and the universalist ideals of science with their contributions to the *zwischenvölkisch* exchange – despite conforming to the National Socialist regime. On a larger scale, it is without question that this behaviour ultimately helped stabilize the scientific system of National Socialism, no matter if the use of *zwischenvölkisch* served as a mere propagandistic lip service or was of honest concern. Crucial to the “normal” scientific practice was that it facilitated German scientists – at least for as long as the war still allowed it – to claim an accord of science with National Socialism in order to justify their own scientific research.

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### 3 The art of Nazi international networking

#### The visual arts in the rhetoric and reality of Hitler's European New Order

*Benjamin G. Martin*

In 1934, Adolf Hitler visited the Venice Biennale art exhibition. Benito Mussolini led the German chancellor, then paying his first official visit to Italy, through a visit to Germany's pavilion. Hitler, himself a former painter, had passionate views about the visual arts and had already launched a programme for the "renewal" of the arts in Germany in the spirit of National Socialism. "This new state", Hitler promised in his first "culture speech" at the Nazi Party rally in 1933, "will devote a much greater degree of attention to the manifestation of cultural matters than the old one", and he called on the nation's artists "to play their part in proudly defending the German *Volk* with their German art" (Hitler [1933] 2013, pp. 119–120). But in addition to this domestic agenda, the Nazis hoped to broadcast their statist-nationalist vision of artistic renewal to international audiences. At Venice, for the first time, the new Germany had a chance to present this vision to the world.

The Venice Biennale was Europe's greatest art fair and a prominent platform for internationalism in the arts (May 2009; Jones 2017, pp. 81–85). Nationalised by the fascist regime in 1930, it had retained an air of the cultural cosmopolitanism that Nazis so vociferously rejected. Germany's 1930 pavilion had included modernist works by Max Beckmann and members of Germany's famed Bauhaus art school, which Nazi activists had hounded into closing down in 1933. Nazi Germany might have been expected to withdraw from the festival altogether, just as it had from internationalist organisations like the League of Nations, the International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation, and the PEN Club. But Hitler appears to have appreciated the power and importance of presenting Germany internationally through its art. "Every great political age in world history", Hitler declared in 1933, "justifies its right to exist by exhibiting the most visible certificate of its value possible: its cultural achievements". The true artist was one "chosen by Providence to reveal to the rest of the world the soul of a people" (Hitler [1933] 2013, p. 120, 119). At Venice, moreover, Germany's soul could be revealed to the world from the safety of a German national pavilion.

Germany's 1934 pavilion greeted visitors with a large eagle and swastika, before opening out into a central room with thirty sculptures, including busts of President Hindenburg and of Hitler and monumental statues of

male athletes and female nudes. The adjacent rooms presented an overview of German painting, carefully selected to reflect the new regime's extreme nationalism. "Internationalistic" trends, one German art journal commented, "had quite disappeared" (quoted in May 2013, p. 191). Germany used the Biennale, then, to showcase its artistic nationalism internationally. But in the context of the intense debates over the arts in the 1930s, what Germany presented at Venice was more than a group of sculptures and paintings. It outlined a set of claims about the appropriate relationship of art to the nation and the state in the modern world.

The 1934 German pavilion in Venice was an early sign of the important role the arts would play in Nazis Germany's international relations. By bringing international audiences into contact with particular works of German painting, sculpture and architecture, the Nazi deployed the arts as a form of cultural diplomacy. At the same time, a particular *idea* of art – understood as a transcendent, non-commercial, non-political reflection of the spirit of the nation – played a crucial role in the Nazis' broader effort to forge pro-German networks of foreign intellectuals and cultural producers in many fields. Art, understood in this depoliticised way, was an essentially neutral category, one ideally suited to masking the real political intent of the international gatherings and institutions where "art" was invoked. Like "science", the apparently neutral, objective and autonomous category of art fulfilled valuable functions in the Nazis' creation and maintenance of international networks. When the Nazis created international cultural institutions, such as the International Film Chamber (IFC, founded in 1935) and the European Writers Union (1941), these bodies deployed a depoliticised understanding of filmic and literary art in such a way as to remove these cultural fields from political contestation. The goal of this practice was, ironically, to mobilise these cultural fields for political purposes. This notion of art's essence simultaneously served a quite radical ideological goal: to redefine the arts and culture as inherently, necessarily *national*, where the nation was understood in a racist sense as a biological entity.

Over time, this idea of art played an even more important role in the Nazis' cultural "New Order" than did actual exchanges of artists or works. Nazi leaders did show great interest in accumulating works of visual art through large-scale buying and looting. But compared to the Nazis' ambitious efforts to restructure the fields of literature, music and cinema through pan-European organisation and institution-building (Martin 2016), the international field of the visual arts was left relatively neglected. Understanding why this was so requires a look at the "art" – in practice and as theory – of the Nazis' international networks.

### **Art in Nazi Germany's pre-war international outreach**

"Germany is in a very bad and difficult situation internationally", Hitler told Goebbels in October 1933.



It should therefore try to impress world public opinion through cultural means. In this context, it is fortunate that the Olympic Games will be held in Germany in 1936, at which all countries of the world take part. If one invites the world to such a festival one has to show the world what the new Germany can do culturally.

(quoted in Keys 2006, p. 137)

During the 1936 Olympics in Berlin, several institutions took up Hitler's injunction. The Kronprinzen-Palais (Crown Prince Palace) hosted a massive exhibition of "Great Germans in Portraits of their Time" presenting some 460 paintings and busts including masterpieces like Titian's portrait of Emperor Charles V and Albrecht Dürer's iconic self-portrait (Wippermann 2013). Young artists from around the world submitted sport-themed works of painting, sculpture and music to an Olympic art competition with an international jury. The art competition had been a feature of the Olympics since the 1912 games in Stockholm, but the Germans raised the event's scale and profile. Aggressively advertised, the event attracted submissions from 23 nations and some 70,000 visitors (Organisationskomitee 1937, p. 1111, 1127, 1135). Meanwhile, Berlin's German Museum (Museum für ältere deutsche Kunst) hosted "Sport in Hellenic Times", a large exhibition of sport-related statuary and artefacts from classical Greece, set against a backdrop of paintings and photographs of Greek landscapes by German artists. A major success, this exhibition attracted nearly 100,000 visitors to the museum's halls, where, the Olympic committee later reported, "their admiration of the Greek bronzes and vases became almost reverent in its sincerity" (Organisationskomitee 1937, pp. 1131–1132).

These events were typical of the way the Nazi regime mobilised the visual arts on the international stage in the mid-1930s. The fine arts helped project an image of Germany as peaceful, open and non-threatening – an image that the regime aimed for throughout the Olympics. Art, like sport, was understood to be measured by standards of excellence that stood beyond the realm of political antagonisms. Both fields could thus be presented as ideal realms for harmonious contact among nations. Juxtaposing German artistic achievements to those of ancient Greece supported the long-standing German claim that "Aryans" shared a unique spiritual and racial bond with the ancient Greeks (Marchand 1996, p. 351).

More broadly, highlighting German respect for Greek antiquity reminded foreign guests of Germany's cultural sophistication, so as to counter the international outcry against the Nazis' assault on so much of contemporary German cultural life. A similar effect was achieved musically when the great German composer Richard Strauss conducted his own *Olympische Hymne* (Olympic Hymns) in Berlin's stadium, while the Olympic flame, brought by torch from Athens, burned in the background (Potter 1992, p. 96).

But the Olympic art events also outlined key features of National Socialism's artistic ideals. Art was presented as a transcendent realm of the spirit,



distinct from and not to be sullied by the baser realms of the market or politics. At the same time, Nazi organisers defined art as deeply, essentially national, able to achieve greatness only insofar as it expressed the creator's national spirit. An effort to balance these ideals characterised the arrangements in Berlin. As Germany's organising committee explained after the Olympic art competition,

the displays of the various nations were arranged around [the exhibition] so that each had a distinctly national character, but on the other hand harmonised with the entire scheme. The entire Exhibition was characterised by a dignified calm which is essential for a true temple of art.

(Organisationskomitee 1937, p. 1124)

Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels, opening the competition in his capacity as president of the Reich Chamber of Culture, outlined this nationalist vision at some length. "The creations of the painter", he declared, "contain life only when they, as actual examples of national art, develop out of the same fundamental spirit which moves and inspires a nation" (Organisationskomitee 1937, p. 1127).

Nazi Germany stressed these principles at several international arts events between 1936 and 1938. The Germans again sent a major exhibition to the Venice Biennale in 1936, and, in 1938, expanded and refurbished the German pavilion in Venice in the Nazi-classicist style, creating something very much like a temple of German art (Lagler 2007, pp. 58–60; May 2013, pp. 193–194). The ideals of art as transcendently anti-materialist and deeply national also characterised what was perhaps the Nazis' most striking pre-war international self-presentation: the German pavilion at the 1937 World Exposition in Paris. Here, in the hulking neo-classical building designed by Albert Speer, Nazi Germany presented itself through a design programme that resembled a 19th-century bourgeois salon more than a 20th-century international exhibition hall (Fiss 2002). German industrial products were displayed like art objects, in silk-lined glass cases, while stained glass windows and mosaics offered an iconography of work marked by Germanic neo-medieval styles, far removed from the standardised realities of modern factory production. As the art historian Karen Fiss argues, this presentation of industrial items through the visual language of the museum "offer[ed] its spectators an illusory retreat, not only from the political to the aesthetic, but also from the modern to the preindustrial", granting "a respite from the political and economic anxieties of contemporary European life" (Fiss 2002, p. 335).

Nazi Germany maintained this idealist-nationalist approach to the fine arts in events of international arts exchange. In 1935, when Berlin hosted the first major exhibition of contemporary Finnish art in Germany, National Socialist ideologue Alfred Rosenberg used the occasion to argue that the true basis for understanding among nations was not cosmopolitan internationalism. Rather, "an explicit *völkisch* posture as well as a deep tie

to the soil (*Bodenverbundenheit*) give the cultural efforts of the Finnish nation a character that will be well understood by the German *Volk* in particular” (Der Norden 1935, p. 139; Petropoulos 1996, pp. 68–70). Finland’s culture minister, the prominent architect Sigurd Frosterus, agreed. Writing in the journal of the Nordische Gesellschaft (Nordic Society), a German-led body that cultivated ideological allies in Scandinavia through cultural exchange, Frosterus presented Finland’s art – “born from the intellectual defence of our spiritual uniqueness” – in parallel terms: “Rarely has a school of art, so free through and through from propagandistic aims [...] borne a more national imprint” (Der Norden 1935, p. 137). In 1937, when Berlin’s Akademie der Künste welcomed a major exhibition of contemporary French painting and sculpture, even France, home of Europe’s greatest modernist artists, bowed to the Nazis’ artistic vision. French organisers sent a group of works, free of surrealism or abstraction, by a roster of exclusively “French-national” painters – including, that is, no recently naturalised foreigners and no Jews (Cone 1998). To nationalise French art in this way purged it of any art seen by cultural conservatives as “political”, and thereby allowed the exhibition to play a mollifying political role in Franco-German relations.

Meanwhile, July 1937 saw the opening in Munich of the infamous Degenerate Art exhibition (Barron 1991; Peters 2014). At this exhibit, modernist paintings were exhibited without frames alongside demeaning graffiti, presenting stylistic innovation as either symptomatic of mental or racial “degeneration”, or of a nefarious scam supposedly led by Jewish art dealers. How could Germany pursue international co-operation through the arts, based on claims to art’s transcendent, unpolitical character, while also promoting this hostile, aggressive assault on contemporary art and artists? The Degenerate Art exhibit seems after all to be the very essence of politicisation of the arts.

### **The autonomy of art in an age of nationalism**

The 1937 Degenerate Art exhibition has remained such a famous example of coercive state art policies in part because it openly attacked the notion of the autonomy of the arts. And autonomy has been a central concept in the very definition of the arts in the modern age. What the historian T.C.W. Blanning has called the “sacralisation of art” (Blanning 2000) in the 19th century rested on the idea of art’s autonomy, articulated in both an ideal and a social dimension. In terms of ideas, art was freed from its servitude to the church or the monarch in Kant’s *Theory of Judgement* (1790), which instead argued that the beauty of a work of art depended on its success at fulfilling art’s own, purely aesthetic, goals (Haskins 2014). In social terms, the 19th century saw the development of new networks of journals, museums and concerts, in which artists and discriminating consumers of their works forged a new “aesthetic sphere” (Seigel 2012, p. 432).

National Socialism violated both of these aspects of art’s autonomy with great violence. Nazi leaders declared that the beauty and value of the work



of art rested in its service to the *Volk*. The Nazi regime assaulted the autonomous aesthetic sphere in German society, seizing paintings, burning books and persecuting countless artists, writers, filmmakers, composers and performers, as well as gallery owners and museum curators. German cultural producers not subject to persecution were regimented into a state-controlled system of guilds, the Reich Chamber of Culture. For European liberals, these interventions by the state into the autonomous sphere of the arts represented a scandalous politicisation of the arts. And that, according to this understanding, was a crime against the autonomy that they saw as fundamental to art's essence.

But the liberal concern with autonomy was not the only way that concerns about the fate of the arts in modern life could be expressed politically. For others, politically to the left and right of bourgeois liberalism, the arts had other enemies than the state. These enemies included capitalism's rampant commercialisation of the arts, or modernism's break with national traditions in favour of international trends, or liberal democracy's apparent tendency to lead artists to insert "politics" into their works. Thinkers on the political right placed the blame for these developments with international forces that seemed to undermine the purity – and the national identity – of art: forces like international finance, Americanisation, Bolshevism, and the Jews. As the crises of the 1930s undermined the legitimacy of political and economic liberalism, artists, writers and political thinkers on the right increasingly called on the state to resolve their problems through strong state action (Steinweis 1993, pp. 17–20). For them, efforts to create new forms of state patronage and control that promised to free artists from the pressures of the market, to defend a narrow vision of the national tradition, and to reconnect artists with the people, did not politicise the arts. Such practices, on the contrary, effected what the musicologist Hanns-Werner Heister (1990, p. 114) has described as Nazi Germany's "radical negation of the 'political', understood as the practical, theoretical, [and even] artistic articulation of interests and needs". By this logic, it was liberal, democratic and capitalist Europe that had politicised the arts. National Socialism, instead, was nationalising the arts, *freeing* art from the grubby world of politics by re-incorporating the arts and artists into the fabric of the life of the *Volk*.

The effort to make political use of art precisely, if ironically, by presenting one's own relationship to the arts as apolitical has not been historically unique to the Nazis. What one scholar has called "the politics of apolitical culture" were a distinctive feature of the Cold War-era cultural diplomacy of the United States (Scott-Smith 2002; see also Barnhisel 2015). One key to making sense of the way National Socialists could make such an apparently contradictory appeal lay in the interwar conflict over the role of the nation in Europeans' understanding of aesthetic culture. If art was a universal human category, an expression of the creative individual which floated above national borders and identities, then coercive efforts to tie art to the nation obviously violated the very spirit of art and the humanist values often associated with



that concept. Indeed, the cosmopolitan view that “art knows no fatherland” was an article of faith for many Western European artists (Esner 2001). The continuing strength of that idea was evidenced by the Nazis’ (and other nationalists’) constant attacks on it. “The platitude that art in particular is international”, Hitler declaimed in 1933, was “vacuous and idiotic”, since it failed to acknowledge “the underlying racial predetermination of style” (Hitler [1933] 2013, p. 116).

If, on the other hand, all true culture was the expression of the nation, and the modern, internationalising world order was undermining the nation, then it was radical nationalists, not socialists or liberal democrats, who were leading the defence of art and culture. This second point of view found many supporters in the strained climate of the 1930s. Pro-Nazi intellectuals recognised that this idea offered the basis for an international appeal. They began early on to mobilise this set of ideas in efforts to rally non-Germans around Nazi German leadership, by presenting Hitler’s Reich as the defender not merely of Germany’s culture, but of national culture as such. In 1934, the German-led Union of National Writers invited “writers of all nations” to join Hitler’s Germany in making “the high concept of the Fatherland [...] the highest, most guiding concept of the future” (Johst and Benn 1934; see Martin 2016, pp. 13–15). This particular institution was short-lived, but claims of this kind would be made with even greater clarity once Hitler’s invasion of Poland in September 1939 again took Europe to war.

### **Art in Nazi wartime international outreach**

On 30 September 1939, just one month into World War II, officials from Goebbels’s Propaganda Ministry insisted to Hitler’s Chancellery on the “necessity to advance German culture promotion (*Kulturwerbung*) in neutral foreign countries during the war with particular emphasis” (quoted in Thomae 1978, p. 87, n. 63). The exhibition-going publics of Europe’s neutral countries were seen as particularly in need of the kind of message about Hitler’s Germany that only art could deliver, and there was no time to lose. The ministry had already begun preparing a series of exhibitions of German art abroad. First up was the exhibition New German Architecture (Neue Deutsche Baukunst), that opened in Belgrade before travelling to Budapest, Bucharest, Sofia and Zagreb. The focus on architecture responded to the international success of the massive exhibitions of German architecture and applied arts in 1938 and 1939 in Munich (Deutsche Architektur- und Kunsthandwerksausstellung). Propaganda Ministry officials had concluded “that the mighty architectural works of the new Germany are the most appropriate [cultural products] with which to communicate to foreign countries an image of the cultural achievement and the artistic style of the Third Reich” (quoted in Thomae 1978, p. 87, n. 63). Accordingly, this exhibition put plans, models and etchings of the monumental archways and avenues that Hitler and the architect Albert Speer planned for post-war

Berlin to international use as it travelled to Madrid, Barcelona, Lisbon and Copenhagen in 1942, and to Istanbul, Ankara and Smyrna in 1943 (Durth 1988, p. 140).

If architectural shows conveyed the confidence and grandeur of Germany's future visions, painting exhibitions abroad allowed Nazi officials to stress Nazi Germany's commitment to high-minded artistic ideals, even in wartime. At the opening of the 1940 Venice Biennale, Adolf Ziegler, German commissar and president of the Reich Chamber for the Visual Arts, wanted foreign listeners to know that "although Germany finds herself at war, we did not want to renounce our participation in the International Exhibition at Venice, just as exhibitions and all other forms of cultural life are being maintained within the Reich" (quoted in May 2009, p. 198). At a January 1941 exhibition at Sweden's National Museum in Stockholm, German printing and graphic arts were likewise mobilised to showcase the richness and breadth of the "Poetry, Art and Science" contained in German print culture (*Das Deutsche Buch* 1941). Some of these exchanges were undermined by the Nazis' own chauvinism and, in particular, Hitler's fanatical opposition to modernist styles. This opposition, not uniformly obeyed even in Germany, was certainly not shared in the rest of Europe. Relations with Germany's "Axis"-partner fascist Italy were particularly vexed. There futurist visual art enjoyed state patronage throughout the years of Mussolini's dictatorship, a difference which led to conflict on more than one occasion. A 1937 exhibition of contemporary Italian art in Berlin had led to a diplomatic fiasco when the inclusion of modernist works sent Hitler into a rage (Garzarelli 2004, pp. 209–223). When the Italians proposed a follow-up exhibition in 1940, the Germans declined, unable to maintain high-level artistic exchanges even with the Reich's closest ally. The two nations' wartime partnership found easier terrain for collaboration in exchanges of soldiers' paintings: an exhibit of German military paintings went up in Rome in 1941 (and later travelled to Finland and South-eastern Europe), while Berlin's Nationalgalerie hosted Italian soldiers' works in 1942 (Hoffend 1998, p. 267; Gesche 2006, p. 119).

Sculpture, finally, was an area of particular focus. The monumental sculpture "Readiness", the German sculptor Arno Breker's stylised depiction of a male nude unsheathing a sword, was the centrepiece of Germany's submission to the 1940 Biennale, where it won the Mussolini Prize (May 2009, pp. 198–199). Breker, whose larger than life-sized statues of musclebound young men and smooth-skinned young women made him a personal favourite of Hitler, was also the focus of one of Nazi Germany's most significant wartime deployments of contemporary art: a large-scale solo exhibition of the sculptor's work at the Orangerie in Paris from May to July, 1942 (Cone 1992, p. 157, 161–164; Petropoulos 2000, pp. 234–236; Dorléac 2008, pp. 100–107). Here Breker's towering bronzes – rumoured to have been cast from the bronze of melted-down French statues – served as the centrepiece of the grand exhibition. The international political significance of the event was underscored by weeks of celebratory events, including official receptions at



the German Embassy and German Institute, lunch offered by Prime Minister Pierre Laval, a mingle at the Musée Rodin, and champagne at the Ritz. It was marked too in reams of articles celebrating Franco-German reconciliation and outlining the terms of good and bad art in the European New Order. Images of the event, signalling the triumph of conservative art in modernist Paris as much as of Germany over France, were spread across Europe in newsreels and in the pages of the internationally distributed propaganda magazine *Signal* (Petropoulos 1996, p. 138).

Several of the French artists attending these events were, by the summer of 1942, already well acquainted with Breker. In October 1941, 13 French artists had accepted an invitation from Germany's Propaganda Ministry to take a study-tour of wartime Germany. For two weeks, the artists were taken to the Reich's major cities, visiting museums, touring artists' studios (including Breker's imposing Berlin atelier) and meeting with Nazi arts officials, including with the president of the Reich Chamber of Visual Arts Adolf Ziegler (Doll 2014). Whatever the French artists may have thought about their German counterparts' works, they were strongly impressed with their working conditions. The sculptor Henri Bouchard, president of the storied Société des Artistes Français, reported that in Nazi Germany, artists were "the treasured children of the nation". In Germany, enthused the painter André Dunoyer de Segonzac, "the state is passionately interested in art" (quoted in Cone 1992, p. 157). The implied contrast was to France's pre-war liberal order, accused of having shown less than passionate interest in artists and their needs.

### **Art as a European category**

While exchanges of this kind spread examples of Nazi-approved German art, and advertised the benefits of Nazi arts policy, Nazi officials likewise made ever greater rhetorical deployment of art – as practice and as an idea – within their international relations. This was particularly the case in those cultural and organisational initiatives through which German organisers promoted the idea that Hitler's war would lead to a new age of European unity. The idea of Europe – a theme of long-standing interest for the Nazis, and an increasingly prominent theme of Goebbels's wartime propaganda machine (Dafinger 2017) – was frequently presented through discussions of the arts. Nazi Germany's highbrow journals made the arts and *Kultur* a central focus of their wartime discussions of Europe and its potential unity under Hitler. In an erudite article on "The Unity of Europe in the Visual Arts" in *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte*, the young art historian Walter Hotz reminded his readers that the first known geographical use of the term "Europa" appears in a Homeric hymn to Apollo. Was it not somehow significant, Holz asked rhetorically, that the continent's richly suggestive name was passed down to us through a hymn to "Apollo, god of the arts"? For Europe's unity was uniquely visibly in the continent's artistic legacy, a



“fruitfulness of the spirit” that “no other continent can match”, rooted in “the racial kinship of the European peoples” (Hotz 1942, p. 289, 291). The notion that the new Europe was marked by a distinctive, nationally rooted conception of art and culture was echoed in official publications, such as the German Foreign Ministry’s 1943 “handbook” *Europa*. “We in Germany”, wrote the young diplomat and scholar Theodor Wilhelm (1943, p. 151), “have recognised – and the continent begins slowly to follow this realisation – that all things of the inner life [...] are necessarily bound to a particular space, a particular *Volk*, and to a concrete order of life”.

German officials aggressively promoted this linkage between Europe and art beyond Germany’s borders. Participants in the 1942 foundation of a new European Youth Federation in Vienna received a magazine that celebrated European unity and superiority through articles on “Europe and the Fine Arts”, “Europe’s Music”, and “German Poetry – European Community” (Kaufmann 1942). Earlier that year, Germany and Italy had gathered young people for large, pan-European conferences not in the political capitals Berlin and Rome, but in the two nation’s capitals of literature and visual art, through the so-called Weimar–Florence “Cultural Bridge” (Ponzio 2015, pp. 183–187). Meanwhile, the Propaganda Ministry’s staff art historian worked on an ambitious Encyclopaedia of the European Visual Arts, reconfiguring the organisation of knowledge about art history into a German-dominated, continental form. Forty of its planned fifty volumes were to be written by non-German scholars, so as to engage European talent while still reflecting “the dominance of the Greater German Reich in the European cultural space” (Fuhrmeister 2006, p. 115). In some cases, these efforts clearly struck a chord. The French sculptor Charles Despiau, on returning from the French artists’ tour of Germany, told an interviewer in November 1941 that he “felt profoundly French”, but, in light of his recent experiences, “hoped to become European” (quoted in Fiss 2009, p. 206).

Alongside these “European”-themed activities, Nazi cultural organisers undertook a major effort to reorder several fields of European cultural life into a new, German-led, continental form (Martin 2016). Pan-European cultural institutions, such as the IFC and the European Writers Union, showed that just as the arts were made to advance an idea of European unity, the particular idea of Europe the Nazis sought to promote was itself characterised by a strong emphasis on art as an idea or value. In these bodies’ meetings and publications, the category of art helped define the “Europe” that Germany claimed to be uniting, even as it served to depoliticise the events and institutions themselves.

The IFC, first launched in Berlin in 1935 to promote cross-national cinema co-operation, sought from 1941 to forge an integrated pan-European cinema bloc under German leadership (De Grazia 2005, pp. 324–327; Martin 2007). But while its goal could scarcely have been more political, its German leaders consistently declaimed the internationally objective, neutral, autonomous value of the art of cinema. The German leadership of the IFC succeeded in

presenting the institution's work as unpolitical by insisting above all not on political or ideological content but on "quality", understood in reference to a film's "artistic" character. In a major official statement published in the IFC's international magazine *Interfilm*, the body's General Secretary, Goebbels' collaborator and SS-man Karl Melzer, told the institution's members, "It is not quantity, but quality that decides". Sounding like any Hollywood producer, Melzer explained that "this principle is, in the film business of the whole world and in particular in the production of feature films, the basis of any organised national film industry and of all international cooperation" (Melzer 1942, p. 20). But "quality" was not to be measured by technical achievement or audience success alone. What characterised a "film of excellence" (*Spitzenfilm*) was "the total artistic realisation".

This focus on art would achieve the IFC's deeper goal: to advance

a European film of high, artistic value [...] which contributes to the European public freeing itself from the imaginings of an American *Zivilisation* that seeks to make the world happy, [instead] finding its way back to the European posture, that rests on a thousand-year-old *Kultur*.  
(Melzer 1942, p. 25)

The IFC president, the Venetian magnate and president of the Venice Biennale Giuseppe Volpi, had underlined the same point at the Venice Film Festival of 1941, the first from which Hollywood films were banned. The IFC's goal, he announced, was

to establish common guidelines for the art, technique, and economy of film so that the European film-world can create [...] a production that will distinguish itself from that of all other countries of the world, a production that is worthy of Europe's high cultural traditions.  
(Internationale Filmkammer 1942, p. 42)

The German press in turn celebrated the 1941 Venice Film Festival as marking film's historic transition "From Commodity to Artwork" (Schmidt 1941). What would make the new European cinema *European* was precisely its link to the category of art.

German officials first proposed the idea of a European Writers Union to an international gathering of European novelists and poets in Weimar in 1941 (Hausmann 2004; Martin 2013). At its events and in its publications, Nazi organisers likewise used a particular idea of art to articulate a vision of European unity and to legitimate the German regime's claim to lead the continent. "National Socialist cultural policy seeks to serve art", one Propaganda Ministry official told German writers and foreign guests in October 1941, led as it was by Hitler, "the first artist of his people" (Haegert 1942, p. 11, 10). Addressing the foreign writers, the German dialect poet Moritz Jahn took pains to note that German writers did not hold "a different



understanding of the value and autonomy [*Eigengesetzlichkeit*] of our common vocation than any one of you” (Jahn 1942, p. 49). But literature of quality was in danger of being overrun by the crass sensationalism promoted by capitalist (especially, Jahn claimed, Jewish) publishers. Likewise, all European national literatures were threatened by the prospect of the Bolsheviks overwhelming the continent. So, while Hitler’s Germany appreciated that European writers’ literary work “must be and is based on particular national [*völkisch*] and individual bases”, these writers needed to appreciate that “Europe as a continent with isolated states will never again be capable of life, it would be christened for destruction” (Jahn 1942, p. 49). Key to both these claims was Jahn’s insistence that “art” was no longer to be understood in a cosmopolitan sense as an abstract, international value. Art in today’s Europe must be understood rather in the spirit of the German philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder, whose “new understanding of literature and of art overall” found value in a work of art’s faithfulness to the particular spirit of a particular people (*Volk*) (Jahn 1942, p. 53). Only Hitler’s imperial reordering of the continent, and statist reordering of the publishing world, could preserve Europe’s literary art – nationally specific and rooted in the racial uniqueness of each European *Volk* – by defending it against Europe’s military and cultural enemies.

### European art in theory, not practice

Arguments like these supported Nazi organisers’ efforts to extend the machinery of the Reich Chambers of Film, Literature and Music to the international level (Martin 2016). But the regime appears to have made no such effort in the field of the visual arts. In the autumn of 1941, as part of their study-tour of Germany, a group of French literary writers were taken to Arno Breker’s Berlin studio – an event publicised in the propaganda magazine *Signal* (Dufay 2001, p. 108) – at almost the same time the delegation of French painters made the same pilgrimage. But these writers then proceeded to Weimar, where they joined writers from around Europe to participate in the foundation of a new continental institution, the European Writers Union. The French painters, by contrast, just went home.

Clues as to why the Nazis did not pursue a continental reorganisation of the visual arts can be found in the motivations and successes of the regime’s arts policies on the domestic level. Shortly after coming to power, Nazi officials took measures to ease the economic plight of painters who were struck hard by the depression. A 1934 law demanded that at least two percent of expenditures on all public buildings go to artistic decoration. Through a richly endowed foundation, Goebbels disbursed prizes and grants to favoured artists (Petropoulos 2000, p. 217). This economic campaign partly motivated aesthetic decisions, too. The Nazi state’s purge of modernist visual art, argues the art historian O. K. Werckmeister (1997, p. 289), reflected Hitler’s personal tastes but “was first and foremost a social



measure [...] to ensure the professional well-being of its conservative artist constituency” (see also Steinweis 1993, p. 76). From the point of view of Germany’s conservative artists, these measures worked. By the later 1930s, artists who were not targeted by the regime’s exclusions – that is, those who were not Jews, avant-gardists or active leftists – noted “gradual but discernible improvement in their economic circumstances” (Petropoulos 2000, p. 217), including steady sales of traditionalist paintings. In cinema or music, strong international forces affecting those fields made domestic measures insufficient to resolve their structural crises (Martin 2016, p. 22, 46–48). By contrast, the Nazi art bureaucracy effectively addressed the economic and aesthetic concerns of traditionalist German painters through a handful of domestic measures. There was little to be gained by seeking to organise painters on a pan-European scale.

There was, moreover, no existing artists’ international organisation that the Nazis felt they needed to fight. Visual artists were relatively absent from the proliferation of international associations that marked so many intellectual and cultural fields in the early 20th century (Sapiro 2009). In literature and music, international bodies like the PEN Club and the International Society for Contemporary Music were powerful forces, which Nazi leaders were determined to combat and ultimately replace. In the visual arts, by contrast, a few efforts had been made to link the arts to various interpretations of internationalism, but none could really be considered international organisations, and none was terribly successful. Today’s International Association of Art, an NGO which is an official partner institution to UNESCO, was founded only in 1952.

While the international field of the visual arts was not the focus of the Nazis’ organisational energies, Nazi leaders did devote quite extraordinary efforts to buying, seizing and looting works of art across the continent. Indeed, the most consequential arts-related international network in Nazi-dominated Europe was surely the continent’s network of art dealers. Nazi officials were thoroughly familiar with this world. In 1938, the regime had tried to turn its purge of modernist art within Germany into hard currency for the regime, by selling off seized modernist works through private dealers (Jeuthe 2007; Fleckner 2017, pp. 6–7). But here, too, the regime made no effort to reorder this field of activity along the lines of so many other Nazi “New European” institutions. Rather, as Jonathan Petropoulos (2000, p. 71) reports, “Hitler, Bormann, and those who had the ultimate say in policy decided that the leaders’ interests were best served by a free market”, so in fact “art dealers in Germany and the occupied Western lands [...] proceeded without significant governmental interference, save the restrictions on foreign currency and the import of modern art into the Reich”. The Germans’ massive campaign of art purchasing and looting did not lack significance in terms of the Nazis’ cultural New Order, however. Relocating masterpieces of European art to Germany was a highly symbolic act, a means of changing the balance of cultural power in Europe forever in Germany’s favour

(Petropoulos 1996, p. 123). Meanwhile, Nazi propagandists branded art as such as something distinctly European, denied to Europe's purportedly culturally inferior enemies. In July 1941, just days after German forces began their invasion of the Soviet Union, Goebbels's office instructed the German press never to use the phrase "Russian artworks", nor to review any books discussing Russian art history (Thomae 1978, p. 112).

## Conclusion

Although it was not joined by an effort to organise the continent's artistic life, the *idea* of art that Nazi officials mobilised internationally had notable strengths. Portraying art as essentially national, transcendent of both politics and economics, and in need of defence from border-crossing enemies including laissez-faire capitalism as well as Soviet communism, spoke to the concerns of quite a few artists and intellectuals. The idea's roots in the intellectual legacy of Romanticism were real, and, for many European intellectuals, quite compelling. The focus on art as an essentially European quality likewise latched on to the urgent concern with European cultural identity that had been a major issue for intellectuals in the interwar years (Ifversen 2002; Ducci 2012; Dini and D'Auria 2013). The notion that art's national character needed to be protected from the debasing effects of modern democratic politics by the coordinating action of the authoritarian state was an idea that lined up well with core political principles that were shared by Nazis, fascists and authoritarian conservative nationalists across Europe: above all, the belief that the national interest, like the nation's art, was single, and was confused and undermined by the cacophony of democratic politics and cultural life.

This idea of art also had real weaknesses, however. By the fall of 1941, the Germans' insistence on Europe's artistic greatness was wearing thin even on fellow fascists. In November 1941, the lead editorial in fascist Italy's official cultural journal quipped that Europe's status as "cradle of thought, of art, of poetry" was not enough to maintain the continent's global dominance. Europe needed new solutions to the continent's economic and social problems – solutions which Italian intellectuals doubted Germany could offer (Critica fascista 1941). Moreover, Nazi officials' fearful insistence on Germany's total dominance in Europe prevented them from seizing opportunities for collaboration. When a group of Hungarian artists, evidently energised by Axis wartime Europeanism, launched an art journal called *Europa* in 1943, the Propaganda Ministry barred German writers from supporting it in any way (Thomae 1978, p. 116). The emphasis on the arts as a soothing realm of reflection and contemplation, free from political tensions and aesthetic provocations, was likewise a double-edged sword. The wartime Biennale exhibits, for example, gave no sign of taking place during a great continental war marked by a fundamental struggle of ideologies. At the 1942 Biennale, Germany's pavilion featured works by the 78-year-old historical painter Arthur Kampf and the classicist sculptor Fritz Klimsch (Tomasella 2001,



p. 97; Becker 2007, p. 86). In the spirit created by works like these, Biennale director Antonio Maraini wrote, “one leaves the Biennale with the relaxing sensation of a harmonious spiritual force, sure of its own path”. This, he foresaw, would be the art “toward which the vision of artists will be oriented in the world that the Rome-Berlin Axis is forming toward a higher civilisation and justice” (quoted in Tomasella 2001, p. 72).

In fact, in Italy – where art criticism was still possible – critics complained that Nazi aesthetic conservatism (and the Biennale’s own timidity) left the Axis powers unable to mobilise the energies of young artists who were eager to support the New Order. Barring “the most unsettling” artists from the Biennale, wrote the painter and critic Nino Bertocchi, had been “a great political, as well as critical error: [it] deceptively suggested a ‘serenity’ denied by the facts, and impeded any effort at understanding among the most passionate spirits in Europe” (quoted in Tomasella 2001, p. 74). As this young artist sensed, the arts might well have played a greater role in creating the New Order in Europe. But that would have required a freedom for the arts and artists that the Nazis’ own policies had already rendered impossible. The Nazi notion of national, “apolitical” art required so much state control as to stifle the kind of artistic engagement with the present that the regime claimed to value.

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## 4    **Treason? What treason? German–foreign friendship societies and transnational relations between right-wing intellectuals during the Nazi period**

*Johannes Dafinger*

Some years after the end of the Second World War, the German regional writer and popular poet Hans Friedrich Blunck reflected about his time as a board member of the Vereinigung zwischenstaatlicher Verbände und Einrichtungen (VzV, Federation of Bilateral Associations and Institutions). The VzV was, in the Nazi period, the umbrella organisation of the Germany-based German-foreign friendship societies (*zwischenstaatliche Gesellschaften*) – registered private organisations like, for example, the Deutsch-Bulgarische or the Deutsch-Französische Gesellschaft which built and maintained academic, intellectual, cultural and informal political relations between Germany and other countries. To this end, they organised academic and cultural events and provided support for visiting foreign scholars and artists who gave lectures or performances in Germany. A number of German friendship societies also collaborated with corresponding friendship societies in their partner countries – the so-called sister societies of the German societies.

According to Blunck, his and his colleagues' engagement within the network of the friendship societies had required “the highest courage and commitment”, and they had to operate against the resistance of Nazi officials (Blunck, H.F. 14 March 1950, to Nedoma, W. [letter] Blunck Papers, private correspondence, Nedoma Walter, 9. Kiel: Schleswig-Holsteinische Landesbibliothek (SHL)). Consequently, Blunck felt “pride” when looking back on his time as board member of the VzV after the end of the war and was sure that in the future, “once one will assess the last decades in a fairer way”, he would be “honoured and praised” for his work in the context of the friendship societies (Blunck, H.F. 12 August 1950, to Nedoma, W. [letter] Blunck Papers, private correspondence, Nedoma Walter, 15. Kiel: SHL).

If the French philosopher Julien Benda had accused Blunck personally that he had “failed to perform his functions” as an intellectual by “descending” into the political arena for the purpose of supporting the Nazi regime (cf. Benda 1955, pp. 32–33 and 36<sup>1</sup>), Blunck probably would have reacted in a similar way to how he reacted to Thomas Mann's accusation that he, Blunck, had been a “literary exponent and a notable” of that regime (Mann, T. [22 July 1946], to Blunck, H.F. [letter] Blunck Papers, private correspondence, Mann Thomas. Kiel: SHL). Blunck told Mann that he, on the contrary, had

been a “fighter of the mind against the arrogance of the powerful” (Blunck, H.F. 3 March 1947, to Mann, T. [letter] Blunck Papers, private correspondence, Mann Thomas. Kiel: SHL).

“Treason? What treason?” was, essentially, Blunck’s answer to Mann. He saw no treason *by*, but rather *against* intellectuals like himself who were tricked by the Nazis and whose good-will – which was part and parcel of their noble objectives – had been hijacked for use by the regime’s cultural propaganda abroad.

Not only is Blunck’s line of defence after the war captured in the title of this paper; the phrase “Treason? What treason?” can also be seen as the maxim of “pro-German” intellectuals who campaigned in their home countries for treating Nazi Germany as a normal country and who maintained working relations with colleagues in Germany during the Nazi period. The Nazi regime eagerly supported such activities, as they helped the regime’s own propaganda campaign directed at an audience abroad. One element of this whitewashing campaign was the message that artistic and academic life in Germany flourished under Hitler. During the First World War, Germany had seen itself confronted with the Allies’ claim that the fight against Germany was a “fight of civilisation against barbarism” (Henri Bergson cited in Trommler 2014, p. 189). The regime was eager to find convincing responses to such accusations should they be made again.

The German friendship societies could not have carried out their activities without the participation of “pro-German” intellectuals in other countries. While previous research has analysed German-foreign friendship societies in the Nazi period as instruments of Nazi-German cultural expansion and imperialism (see esp. Bojadžieva 1985; Ritter 1989; Sösemann 1995; Hoffend 1998, pp. 134–151; Lademacher 2003; Janué i Miret 2008; Passman 2008; Sösemann 2010; Bock 2014, pp. 203–283), this paper focuses on their role as “contact zones” which facilitated the transnational exchange of ideas between German intellectuals and “pro-German” intellectuals in other countries. This exchange ultimately led to the formation of a common discourse of German and “pro-German” intellectuals, revolving around the idea of an ethno-nationalist “New Europe”.

The findings are based on a broad spectrum of primary sources, both published and archived. Specifically, the Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts (PAAA, Political Archive of the German Foreign Office) in Berlin – whose cultural division had been in close contact with the friendship societies – and Blunck’s literary estate in the library of the region of Schleswig-Holstein in Kiel both hold rich materials. Furthermore, several friendship societies published journals or yearbooks whose content is analysed here.

### **Friendship societies in the Nazi period**

Friendship societies within Germany were highly elitist associations. Even the biggest of them gathered no more than a few hundred individuals.<sup>2</sup> Besides



state and Nazi party officials – among them especially representatives of the Foreign Office, the Propaganda Ministry, the Dienststelle Ribbentrop (that is Joachim von Ribbentrop's "office", a semi-state and semi-party institution, see Jacobsen 1968, pp. 263–264), and later also the SS – scholars, artists, diplomats, business leaders, journalists, students and, generally, people from the bourgeois milieu with an academic background, also joined these associations. Many of them had a professional interest in building relations with the partner countries. For example, Romanists became members of the German–Italian, German–Spanish or German–French Society. Business leaders often worked for enterprises which maintained foreign economic relations.

Even before 1933, the friendship societies traditionally engaged in two fields of activity: organising lectures, concerts, readings and other forms of academic or cultural events for (and with) their members and often also for the wider public and supporting academic and cultural exchanges, as well as informal political relations between Germany and their respective partner countries. That meant, in practice, that scientists, intellectuals and artists from other countries were invited to talk or perform before an audience in Germany. The friendship societies also organised tea or dinner receptions for them and other visitors to Germany. All of this brought the guests in contact with colleagues from Germany. During academic, cultural, and social events – which were regularly attended by prominent German politicians and by representatives of foreign governments – there was always room for informal political interaction as well. Foreigners were also invited to contribute to publications by the friendship societies.

These activities, which were quite bourgeois in their form, were not stopped after Hitler became German chancellor in January 1933. But they were closely monitored from then on by state or Nazi party officials in order to ensure that the content of the lectures, performances or publications did not conflict with National Socialist ideology and policies. As such, board members of existing friendship societies who were critical of the Nazi regime were forced to leave office and were replaced by representatives of government and party agencies. Friendship societies whose directors refused to co-operate were suspended. One striking example is the German–French Society, which was dissolved and afterwards founded anew under the same name by other, Nazi-friendly personnel (Passman 2008; Bock 2014). In addition to the political "Gleichschaltung", the "reorganisation" of the associations included measures which forced not only board members, but also ordinary members to leave the associations if they were Jewish (Springer, F. 21 July 1938, to Roth, P. [letter] R 61.273. PAAA).

As a second way of controlling the friendship societies, they were incorporated into the VzV, the umbrella organisation Blunck was working for. The VzV was established by the Propaganda Ministry and the Dienststelle Ribbentrop in 1936. These agencies, together with the Foreign Office, also selected the members of the board of directors and the office staff of the VzV. Both presidents of the VzV until 1945, Hermann von Raumer and his



successor Werner Lorenz, were at the same time chairmen of the Dienststelle Ribbentrop. When Raumer left both offices in July 1938, Lorenz took them over. As Lorenz – the head of the Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle (which was in charge of the resettlement of “Ethnic Germans”) and an *Obergruppenführer*, the highest SS rank after *Reichsführer-SS* – was also one of Heinrich Himmler’s closest associates; his appointment showcases the importance that the SS gained in the world of the friendship societies.

To the outside, the VzV was a private association founded by several friendship societies themselves (statutes of the VzV [original in the register of associations] A Pr. Br. 030–04, No. 2015, fol. 1–4. Berlin: Landesarchiv Berlin). At the same time, though, the friendship societies were financially dependent on the VzV and the Stiftung Deutsches Auslandswerk (Stiftung DAW). The latter was closely linked to the VzV. Its first president was the aforementioned Hans Friedrich Blunck until autumn, 1941, when Werner Lorenz took over the presidency of the Stiftung DAW as well. Its purpose was to disguise that the Nazi regime was supporting and financing the friendship societies, as, starting in June 1938, the bulk of their funding came from the Adolf Hitler-Spende der deutschen Wirtschaft, a fund of German companies at Hitler’s personal disposal; the Foreign Office and the Propaganda Ministry also gave additional money for special projects. While the friendship societies continued to design their daily business themselves after they had joined the VzV, the VzV had the power to veto their decisions by 1939 (circular of the VzV to its members No. 27/39, 16 September 1939, R 61.296. PAAA; cf. also agreement between the VzV and its members, summer 1938, R 64 IV/6, fol. 220–222. Berlin: Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde). The VzV enforced a clear hierarchy between the friendship societies in Berlin and those in other German cities, too: the societies outside Berlin had to transform themselves into local branches of the Berlin-based friendship societies.

The VzV and the regime supported not only the work of existing friendship societies, but also the foundation of new ones. All German friendship societies together, old and new, formed an extensive network. In addition to the two dozen or so friendship societies in Berlin, at least 109 local branches in 41 German cities existed at some point during the 12 years of the Nazi regime (not all simultaneously, though). In Berlin alone, the friendship societies organised over 900 events between 1933 and 1945. The number of events peaked in the early phase of the Second World War: on average, one event by a friendship society took place every other day during the fiscal year between April 1940 and March 1941. Over one-third of all the events during the twelve years of the Nazi dictatorship were (popular science) lectures – about half of them given by Germans and the other half by foreigners.<sup>3</sup>

Many of the German friendship societies had a counterpart in their partner countries, that is, a friendship society whose aim was to foster relations with Germany. The Germans called these associations abroad sister societies. Among European countries, Italy, Spain, France, the Netherlands, Great Britain, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Greece

all had such associations prior to the Second World War. During the war years, some of them were dissolved. At the same time, sister societies of German friendship societies were founded in Romania and Slovakia. The Yugoslav–German Society in Zagreb was transformed into a Croat–German Society. In some countries, more than one friendship society maintaining relations with Germany existed, either independently from one another or, like in Germany, in the form of a system of one head association and a number of local branches. Bulgaria had the most extensive network of such associations: Bulgarian–German Cultural Associations had spread to numerous Bulgarian cities, complementing the Bulgarian–German Society in Sofia. While there had been only five of them in the 1920s, their number rose to 62 in 1943 (Bojadžieva 1985, p. 189, Beckerle, A.-H. 15 March 1944, to the German Foreign Office [letter] R 61.401. PAAA).

The associations outside of Germany were supported by members of the political, academic, cultural and economic elites of their countries as well. The leading figures in these societies were often professors, former ministers or business men. A report by the secretary general of the German–Bulgarian Society about the Bulgarian–German Cultural Associations characterised the members of the associations as “the intellectual and economic elite – the Bulgarian intelligentsia” (Haucke, K. 1936 [report on the Bulgarian–German Cultural Associations], R 61.286. PAAA). The majority of these “pro-German” intellectuals belonged to conservative, ethno-nationalist circles, often advocating authoritarianism; some were also members of the fascist parties in their countries. Many of them had spent some time in Germany, for example as students. Sister societies of the German friendship societies made their Jewish members leave the associations, too, after the Nazis came to power in Germany (Annual Report 1933–34 of the Bulgarian–German Cultural Association in Plovdiv, 29 April 1934 [report] R 61.139. PAAA).

A number of sister societies received financial or material support from Germany, either from German friendship societies or directly from the German state. The German–Bulgarian Society is an example of a German friendship society which helped (and patronised) its counterpart by sending journals and books to its library free of charge. The German association even transferred money to Sofia, allowing the Bulgarian–German Society to furnish its new building (Haucke, Kurt 10 February 1940 [report] R 61.286. PAAA). Books were sent by the Deutsch-Ausländischer Buchtausch to the Spanish–German Society at the request of the Dienststelle Ribbentrop (Jürgens, A. 4 June 1941, to Nabersberg, C. [letter] R 27.159b. PAAA). But the German commitment went much further. From 1942 to 1944, sources show that the Foreign Office paid annual grants to several friendship societies in other countries, over 56,000 Reichsmark in 1942 and around 150,000 in 1943. In 1944, probably even more was granted to associations in European countries alone. The Foreign Office was willing to make substantial additional contributions when associations made major acquisitions, for example if they bought new buildings to house their offices, libraries and



event rooms (Cultural Division of the Foreign Office 27 February 1942 [report] R 60.804. PAAA, Cultural Division of the Foreign Office 10 February 1944 [report] R 61.401. PAAA).

### **Transnational relations and ideological commonalities of right-wing intellectuals across Europe**

The Nazi regime saw its support for friendship societies as part of its cultural propaganda initiatives directed towards influential individuals and, to a less extent, the broader public in other countries. Governmental bodies and Nazi Party agencies intended to use the friendship societies as propaganda instruments. At the same time, the Foreign Office in particular warned that the propaganda message would only resonate with an international audience if it was not *perceived* as state propaganda by this audience. Therefore, any state and Nazi Party influence on the friendship societies was hidden (see for example von Neurath, K. 24 April 1935, to Goebbels, J. [letter] R 66.078. PAAA). This is why the VzV and all friendship societies were officially private institutions.

Nazi officials who co-ordinated the propaganda efforts assumed that the friendship societies could have a positive political impact if the activities of the societies sent the message to their partner countries that the National Socialist government was not hostile to academia or culture, and, to the contrary, German culture was thriving under the Nazi regime. As mentioned above, the Nazis found it necessary to underline this because they were afraid that their political opponents in other countries could, after Hitler became chancellor of Germany, make the claim that the German Reich was a threat to all culture. To counter these accusations, the Nazis were eager to demonstrate that academic and cultural life in Germany went on undisturbed after 1933 (Trommler 2014, p. 442). Institutional continuities and the continuation of well-established practices – like the fostering of international academic and cultural relations by the friendship societies – would help mask the changes that actually did result from Nazi policies: the emigration of scholars and artists, the stepping-down or removal of political opponents and Jewish citizens from positions in academia and culture, and the (temporary) rise of an allegedly “German” science. Thus, as windows of German academia and culture to the outside world, friendship societies which had existed prior to 1933 were not to alter their activities. That they kept working was to suggest “normalness” in academic and cultural relations with Germany under Hitler. Foreign scholars and artists were to be reassured that the regime change in 1933 did not mean that academic and cultural relations with Germany had to be broken off. An international isolation of German academia and culture should be avoided at all costs.

“Pro-German” intellectuals outside Germany supported the objectives of making the Nazi regime look like a “normal” regime and allowing Nazi Germany’s intellectuals and artists to maintain contact with colleagues in



other countries. Those intellectuals who were living in democratic countries often argued that they did not have a biased picture of the Nazi regime themselves, but that the press coverage of German politics was biased in their own countries. They demanded “objectivity”, “real neutrality” and “fairness” towards Germany (Griffiths 1980, pp. 183–185; Almgren 2001; Widmalm 2011; Lundell 2017).

The most valuable people for the Nazi regime were those supporters who were not directly involved in politics and who were also not in pro-German political movements. As board members of the sister societies, the German side preferred individuals who had been in Germany for a longer period of time (for example as students), who maintained working relations with colleagues in Germany, and who could claim to be politically impartial (for example, university professors with no exposed position in politics). For instance, the secretary general of the German–Bulgarian Society, Kurt Haucke, rejected two possible candidates, Bogdan Filov and Ljuben Dikov, for the leadership of the Society for a Bulgarian–German Cultural Approach (later renamed the Bulgarian–German Society) as being “too political and too committed to one party” (Haucke, K. n.d. [report on a business trip to Sofia, Vienna and Munich from 16 to 26 February 1939] R 61.286. PAAA). The friendship societies, both in Germany and in other countries, should not appear to be associations that were pursuing the agenda of a political party.

The friendship societies were places where its members and guests – both intellectuals and politicians – discussed ideas of an international order in Europe based on racist and ethno-nationalist principles. In the publications of these friendship societies, as well as in speeches given during events put on by these societies, Europe was depicted as a community of “peoples” (*Völker*). The “diversity” (*Vielfalt* and *Verschiedenheit*) of the (ethno-)“national characters” (*nationale Individualitäten*) on the continent – a phrase that personified “peoples” – was seen as a value in itself (quotes from Arnim 1937, p. 99). Starting in the publications of the German–French Society<sup>4</sup> in the mid-1930s and then quickly taken up by representatives of other friendship societies and intellectuals close to them, this ethnic “diversity” was portrayed as something typically “European” that had to be preserved. In addition, and despite this “diversity”, the “peoples” in Europe were said to be bound together by a “certain internal unity of European civilisation” (Arnim 1937, p. 99). It was believed that there was a “European overall culture” (*europäische Gesamtkultur*) (Mündler 1944, p. 6) which had to be defended against Bolshevism and Americanism.

Ideas of an ethno-nationalist Europe were discussed in many European countries at this time – in countries allied with, or, during the war, occupied by, Nazi Germany as well as in neutral countries. This points to ideological commonalities of the ethno-nationalists and the far-right milieus in Europe, including Nazi Germany. The friendship societies were of prime importance as contact zones and “spaces of communication” (Hachtmann 2014, p. 209)

between Germans and other Europeans for identifying these ideological commonalities. Their events and publications facilitated a transnational discourse on visions for the future of Europe. Fascists and ethno-nationalist conservatives in different countries participated in this discourse. This exchange of ideas allowed for the identification and development of notions and objectives shared internationally in these milieus.

“Pro-German” intellectuals played an important part in this discourse. An analysis of the lectures given by non-Germans at the invitation of German friendship societies and of contributions to the societies’ journals and year-books shows that intellectuals from outside of Germany were involved in shaping the idea of an ethno-nationalist “new order” for Europe. The topics of these lectures and articles can roughly be assigned to four thematic fields. The first field is formed by lectures and articles concentrating on the history of the speakers’ home countries. In the narrative of these texts, the nation state stood at the presumably logical end of a long process of emancipation of primordial ethno-national communities from foreign suppression. In addition, some of these history lectures and articles highlighted the historical role of the speaker’s or author’s home country for the “defence of European values” against external enemies. The second thematic field of these lectures and articles was cultural studies, encompassing a variety of topics, such as contemporary folk culture, geography or the economic system of a country. The focus here was on national peculiarities. A third group of lectures and articles focused on economic, cultural, academic or political relations between the speaker’s or author’s country and Germany, and attempted to demonstrate the mutual benefits of such relations. Finally, the fourth category of lectures and articles dealt specifically with questions around the envisaged “new order” of Europe and explored the position and role of the speaker’s or author’s country within this order. It was argued in these contributions that Europe had not come into being through negotiations, but, rather, that it resulted from a historical process and had grown “organically”. Whether a country belonged to Europe or not was not, the argument ran, a matter of choice and no country could “arbitrarily and unpunished detach itself” from Europe (Dikov 1942, p. 284).

Across the board, many of the statements sounded – in addition to ethno-nationalistic – anti-democratic, anti-liberal, anti-communist, and, sometimes, anti-Semitic or racist. There were, of course, differences between these statements. Contributions to the publications of the German–Italian Society, for example, tended to emphasise the role of the German–Italian “Axis” for the “New Europe”. Alessandro Pavolini, the Italian Minister for Folk Culture (who had studied law and political science), even argued that the whole history of continental Europe was an “unbroken chain” of relations between the “two greatest European civilisations”: “Roman” and “Germanic” (Pavolini 1942/43, p. 321). This was a topic rarely mentioned in publications of other friendship societies. Nevertheless (and maybe surprisingly), even intellectuals from other countries accepted this claim, which, in essence, was also a claim for Italy and Germany



to lead the continent. The aforementioned Ljuben Dikov, a professor of law at the University of Sofia and former Minister of Justice in Bulgaria, wrote, for example, in the yearbook of the German–Bulgarian Society that the German–Italian Axis had always been at the centre of the European cultural exchange. Around this Axis, “the peoples and countries of our continent crystallised completely naturally” (Dikov 1942, p. 284). Others spoke in favour of a purely German hegemony in Europe, among them the Bulgarian biologist and advocate of National Socialist race theory Stefan Konsulov (Konsulov 1942, p. 1).

Needless to say, the Nazi regime would not have allowed a real pluralistic debate in this regard. The discourse around the “New Europe” should also not be mistaken as a kind of negotiation that could have led to a formal treaty on something like a federation of European countries. While Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop might, out of tactical considerations, have been willing to sign some loose, non-binding letter of intent which would not have “predetermined anything” for the post-war order (1943 cited in Neulen 1987, p. 108), any such step was rejected by Hitler. If we trust a note on 2 May 1943 by Ernst von Weizsäcker, the State Secretary in the German Foreign Office, Hitler argued that

the reason we should not engage in talks about a ‘new order of Europe’ [...] is that, in the end, our neighbours are all our enemies. We have to squeeze them out, but we can and should not promise them anything.

(Weizsäcker 1974, p. 337)

At the same time, though, statements by foreign scholars have to be interpreted as signs of an overall consensus of far-right and ethno-nationalist intellectuals in Germany and in other countries on what the “New Europe” should look like. The analysis of the discourse on Europe within the framework of the friendship societies shows that the established bourgeoisie in Germany and in other European countries, among them many scholars, could connect to core elements of National Socialists ideas on Europe. Also, even though no written, binding treaty on the Nazi “new order” in Europe was signed, the discourse on Europe did bind the Nazi regime in its decisions in some respect. This becomes especially obvious in the evacuation of “pro-German” intellectuals to Germany in the last phase of the war, when the German army was retreating (cf. Impekoven 2013, pp. 402–415). These evacuations were a logistical challenge for the Nazi regime, but they were, nevertheless, carried out until the very last weeks of the war because the ideology of the “New Europe” rendered it obvious to do so. Several friendship societies were involved in giving “individual support” to “members of the cultural elite of all European refugee groups”, especially to scholars, artists and politicians (Cultural Division of the German Foreign Office, n.d. (probably autumn 1944) [note on the tasks of the German cultural diplomacy towards the European refugee movement] R 60.657. PAAA).



## Conclusion

The German friendship societies and their sister societies abroad facilitated the emergence and evolution of a large, transnational network of right-wing intellectuals. The Nazi regime supported the associations because its ministries and party agencies concerned with foreign relations and propaganda considered the friendship societies useful instruments to positively influence the image of Nazi Germany in other countries and to promote a “new order” in Europe based on ethno-nationalism and racism.

Julien Benda’s (1955, p. 145) prognosis in 1927 that “a humanity where every group is striving more eagerly than ever to feel conscious of its own particular interests, and makes its moralists tell it that it is sublime to the extent that it knows no law but this interest” was “heading for the greatest and most perfect war ever seen in the world”, was tragically accurate. Certainly, not all intellectuals had replaced the “cult of the human” with that of the national (cf. Benda 1955, p. 144). There were intellectuals who refused to come to Germany as long as it had a National Socialist government, or who criticised the regime, its anti-Semitic policies and other policies publicly (cf. Trommler 2014, pp. 446–447). But those who distanced themselves from the Nazis had to realise that many of their colleagues – especially in countries where the political spectrum had generally moved to the right in the 1930s – were willing to co-operate. This willingness stabilised the rule or hegemony of Nazi Germany over big parts of Europe.

The success of the friendship societies in gaining the support of “pro-German” intellectuals throughout Europe reveals the “connectivity” of large strata of the bourgeois milieus in different countries with some aspects of the National Socialist political programme. After the war, scholars and artists often presented themselves as “unpolitical”, but an examination of their publications furnishes evidence for ethno-nationalist, authoritarian, anti-liberal, anti-Semitic, anti-communist and other political beliefs they shared with the Nazis. Whether it is worse in a moral sense if such beliefs are upheld by intellectuals than if they are upheld by other people, as Benda seems to imply with the characterisation of the intellectuals’ behaviour as “treason”, needs not to be answered here. What is certain, though, is that intellectuals took part in trying to make this “treason” the new normal.

## Notes

- 1 The French original was published as “La Trahison des Clercs” in 1927, a French reprint with new preface in 1946. I am using the English translation published in Great Britain, originally under the title “The Great Betrayal”, later changed to “The Betrayal of the Intellectuals (La Trahison des Clercs)”. The English translation published in the USA has the title “The Treason of the Intellectuals”.
- 2 For the years 1940–1942, see the audit reports on several friendship societies of the Deutsche Revisions- und Treuhand-Aktiengesellschaft Berlin in R 61.389, R 61.390, R 61.391. PAAA.

- 3 The numbers given in this paragraph are based on an evaluation of the journal *Diplomatisches Bulletin* (which reported on events of the friendship societies in Berlin), of publications of the VzV (newsletter/regular report on events of its members, circular to its members) and of publications of the individual friendship societies.
- 4 In the framework of the German–French Society, liberal concepts of Europe had been debated throughout the 1920s. Intellectuals in the nazified German–French Society, that replaced the “old” one in 1935, obviously felt challenged to counter those liberal concepts of Europe with their own.

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## 5 Some remarks on relations between Germany and Japan in the field of research, 1933–1945<sup>1</sup>

*Hans-Joachim Bieber*

It is well known that political relations between Germany and Japan became stronger after 1933, and that, eventually, the two countries became allies. One could assume, therefore, that there was a concurrent increase in relations between German and Japanese scientists and scholars as well. This topic has not yet been examined comprehensively. Studies conducted to date, however (Muntschick 1984; Seidler and Ackermann 1986; Bieber 2014), suggest that such relations were rare, and that only few channels of collaboration existed between German and Japanese scientists and scholars who were sympathetic to National Socialism. As a whole, interest in National Socialism among Japanese academics appears to have been limited. This chapter gives an overview of these relations and discusses their political character.

### **Relations between Germany and Japan in the field of research prior to 1933**

Relations between Germany and Japan in the field of research date back to Japan's so-called Meiji restoration in the last third of the 19th century when scientists and other experts from the West began aiding in Japan's modernization. Experts from Germany were especially involved in the fields of medicine, law and administration; after 1871, also in modernizing Japan's military. During the same period, many young Japanese went abroad to study and chose Germany above all to study medicine and law. Long-term stays of Western experts in Japan ended as early as the 1890s, when Japanese who had studied abroad assumed leading positions at Japanese universities and other institutions. Subsequently, well-known German (and Austrian) scientists travelled to Japan as visiting professors, for example Robert Koch in 1908, Albert Einstein in 1922, the chemist Fritz Haber in 1924, the pathologist Ludwig Aschoff in 1926, the economist Joseph Schumpeter in 1931. Conversely, starting in the 1890s, budding Japanese scientists began to go abroad for advanced training. (Professors at the Imperial universities were legally entitled to two research trips abroad at public expense.) Those wishing to focus on medicine and law continued to select Germany, which, however, was also chosen for study in other fields. By the 1920s, nearly all Japanese university professors involved in certain fields of

medicine had received instruction from the same professors in Germany. Out of 26 Japanese chairs for pathology, for example, 23 were occupied by professors who had studied under Ludwig Aschoff in Freiburg, the internationally most renowned German pathologist. Despite the fact that, in Japan and elsewhere, English began to replace German as the language of science and scholarship after the First World War, some Japanese medical journals continued to be published in German as late as the 1930s. Common attendance by several Japanese researchers at one particular German university or in classes held by one particular German professor contributed to the establishment of networks between researchers of both countries. One such network was revealed in the appointment of Aschoff as honorary president of the Japanese Pathological Society during his visit to Japan in 1926 – an honour which until then had been bestowed exclusively to Japanese researchers (Aschoff 1966, pp. 356–360).

As German was regarded as a language of science and scholarship in Japan, it was a required subject in the *Kotogakkos* – schools similar to colleges which young Japanese had to attend before entering university. German was taught there not only by Japanese instructors of whom many had studied in Germany, but, in every *Kotogakko*, by a German lecturer as well – a unique characteristic of Japanese–German cultural relations unparalleled in any other country. These lecturers were chosen and paid by their respective *Kotogakko*, without the involvement of German officials. They were appointed for three years, but were frequently granted extensions. In 1933, they totalled about 50 in number and were scattered throughout Japan.

After the First World War, German–Japanese relations in the field of research began to change. Japanese who had studied in Germany – scientists, industrialists and public officials, such as the mayor of Tokyo – became patrons of German science, which after 1918 suffered from a lack of money and international isolation. The master–student relationship which had previously characterized German–Japanese academic relations was now a relationship between equals, at least in principle. This became evident in the establishment of two binational cultural institutes, the Japan-Institut in Berlin in 1926 and the Japanese-German Cultural Institute (JGCI) in Tokyo in 1927, as each was headed by both a Japanese and a German director. In the late 1920s, a student-exchange agreement was set up between the universities of Leipzig and Kyoto, albeit only for a very limited number of participants. In Berlin, the Deutsch-Japanische Gesellschaft (DJG) was founded in 1929 to bring Germans interested in Japan together with Japanese living in Germany. Owing to the small amount of funding that these institutions received, however, they remained unimportant prior to 1933.

Relations in the field of research between Germany and Japan were nevertheless asymmetric. Japanese researchers came to Germany to learn, not to teach. Apart from a few instructors of Japanese and the Japanese director of the Japan-Institut, who was usually invited to be a visiting professor at Berlin University, there were no other Japanese academics working at German



universities. In Japan, the Imperial universities of Tokyo, Osaka, Sendai and Fukuoka had departments of German, each of which normally had two professorships; moreover, some special schools and private universities offered German studies as well. In Germany, on the other hand, the University of Hamburg was the only institution to have a chair for Japanese studies before 1914. A second chair, at the School of Oriental Languages in Berlin, was limited to teaching without research obligation. A Japanese publisher, Hikoiichi Motoyama, the editor of the *Osaka Mainichi*, the Japanese newspaper with the largest circulation, enabled Leipzig University to establish two further professorships in 1932. In the late 1920s, at least 100 young Japanese studied German, and annually some 70 Japanese students were enrolled in Germany. By comparison, the number of young Germans studying Japanese at that time was minimal and the number of German students enrolled at Japanese universities quite negligible.

Cultural relations between Germany and Japan were similarly asymmetrical before 1933. In Japan, German music enjoyed great popularity, and even prior to 1914, much classical German literature and other written works had been translated into Japanese. In the 1920s, there were Japanese translations of books by contemporary authors such as Thomas Mann, Hermann Hesse and Erich Maria Remarque and by philosophers and sociologists such as Nietzsche, Heidegger, Marx, Engels and Max Weber. In contrast, German translations of Japanese works could by the end of the 1920s easily be fitted onto one small bookshelf. Japan's most important writers were mostly unknown in Germany, more so Japanese music. Only Japanese fine arts, especially coloured woodcarvings, had a certain reputation since the late 19th century. Very few Germans had ever been to Japan, and probably not more than 150 Germans had a command of Japanese. For most Germans, Japan remained a widely unknown, exotic country until 1933.

### **Japanese reactions to the National Socialist rise to power**

The tradition of German–Japanese relations in the field of research and the strong influence of Western thinking on Japanese universities in general kept Japanese academics from applauding the National Socialists' rise to power in Germany in 1933. Many of them were horrified, above all those who had studied in Germany. They were shocked to learn that Jewish professors were being dismissed from the universities, even more so if their former teachers were included. Japanese Germanists protested openly against the book burnings, and German lecturers in Japan were often asked: "Why is Hitler destroying German literature?" (Matsushita 1989, pp. 58–61). Racial discrimination against individuals of mixed German–Japanese background and of Japanese children attending German schools were another source of indignation (Furuya 1995, pp. 26–31). Although cases like these were indeed rare, simply because the number of such individuals and of Japanese children in German schools was minimal, they attracted great



attention in Japan, where the public was highly sensitive to racial discrimination, especially after the US, one of Japan's allies of the First World War, had denied a declaration of racial equality in the Paris peace treaties. The Japanese public disapproved, too, of German officials trying to expel the few Germans of Jewish origin from Japanese universities. First among these was Klaus Pringsheim, the brother-in-law of Thomas Mann, who in 1931 had been appointed professor for composition and conducting at the music academy of Tokyo, at that time one of the most important positions in Japan's musical life. Moreover, Hitler's derogatory remarks in *Mein Kampf* about the Japanese were well known in Japan.<sup>2</sup>

German diplomats in Japan tried to counter this outrage by giving lectures in Japanese academic circles explaining that German racial laws affected only Jews, not Japanese and individuals of mixed German–Japanese background (which eventually proved to be untrue). They also attempted to demonstrate alleged similarities between National Socialist and Japanese concepts of state and society. At a meeting of Japanese researchers in December 1933, a German diplomat stated that National Socialism conceived of “the national self as a living organization of individuals belonging together” and likened this to the Japanese concept of *kokutai* which gave the Japanese people a “sense of exceptionality toward other peoples”. He assured his audience that “[we] share with the peoples of East Asia the concept of the people as a big family that feels unified and views and respects other peoples of ethnic homogeneity as united, too” (Bieber 2014, p. 163). German diplomats in Japan also tried to influence Japanese media. A 1934 special edition of a Japanese periodical appearing in English was for example devoted to German–Japanese friendship. The diplomats also tried to enlist the aid of German lecturers in Japan, some of whom were ardent supporters of National Socialism. The NSDAP which was represented in Japan, beginning in 1933, organized the lecturers in a special chapter of the Nationalsozialistischer Lehrerbund (NSLB, National Socialist Teacher Association) to influence them. The JGCI in Tokyo published some brochures promoting the understanding of the “new Germany” (Beiträge 1934).

Until the mid-1930s, though, such efforts scored only moderate success. Until then relations between Germany and Japan in the field of research continued as they had before 1933. The deployment of Japanese students and researchers – primarily physicians, scientists and engineers – to Germany did not yet appear to have political motives; German researchers continued to show little interest in visiting Japan; and Japanese academics who publicly campaigned for National Socialist Germany remained an exception. One of them, Mimosuke Momo, who had interviewed Hitler in Berlin before 1933, published extracts of *Mein Kampf* in Japanese in 1934 and intended to establish an institute for contemporary German history and economy in Tokyo, but was unsuccessful. In the same year, Japanese legal experts in Osaka interested in the law of the “new Germany” founded an association, called Eiche, but apparently did not establish contacts with

National Socialist colleagues in Germany. The JGCI primarily focused on Japanese who knew German and were acquainted with pre-National-Socialist Germany; the German director's influence was limited and his conversion to National Socialism slow. The second Japanese–German cultural institute in Japan, the Deutsches Forschungsinstitut (DFI, German Research-Institute) founded in Kyoto in 1934, was led by the first German who (in 1921) had obtained a Ph.D. in Japanese studies, Friedrich Max Trautz. Trautz was a member of the NSDAP, but interested in traditional Japanese culture only. Therefore, he was fiercely attacked by young National-Socialist German lecturers who supported a more aggressive cultural policy in Japan. These lecturers may have tried to establish relations to Japanese sympathetic to National Socialism, but this can be documented in a few cases only. The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Natur- und Völkerkunde Ostasiens (German Association for the study of East Asian nature and ethnology), which had long maintained contacts with Japanese scientists and scholars, apparently did not try to influence them politically even though some board members demonstrated strong support for National Socialism. The Kokusai Bunka Shinko-Kai (Association for International Cultural Relations), founded in 1934, supported ties with Germany by supporting, for example, German students in Japan, but also invited researchers who had left Germany for political reasons like the sociologist Karl Wittfogel; mainly, it tried to expand knowledge of Japanese culture abroad.

Neither did the Japan-Institut in Berlin really become a meeting ground for Germans and Japanese sympathetic to National Socialism in the initial period after 1933. Its German director, Martin Ramming, was at heart apolitical and avoided political statements; and Japanese living in Berlin did not show interest in National Socialism. Takahiko Tomoeda, the Japanese director who came to Berlin in 1934, was deemed by the German embassy in Tokyo to be sympathetic to National Socialism; but he proved uninterested in contacts with National Socialists and tried instead to make the institute the venue of German experts on Japanese studies and for expanding Japanese studies at German universities. The DJG was taken over by National Socialists as early as 1933. In the following years, its membership multiplied, and its funding was provided by the German foreign ministry and Goebbels' ministry of propaganda (Hack 1996, pp. 136–140, 157–172, 190–195). Japanese scientists and scholars in Germany, however, avoided the association, which, in addition, had no relations to researchers in Japan.

### **German–Japanese research relations during the years of political rapprochement**

In 1936, political relations between Germany and Japan intensified. Both countries felt constrained by the Paris peace treaties, in particular by military restrictions; both regarded bolshevism to be their major ideological enemy; openly or secretly, both pursued territorial expansion, and both left



the League of Nations in 1933. The political and social order of both countries, too, assumed similar characteristics when Japan's domestic policy became increasingly authoritarian. In spite of a failed military coup, in February 1936, the political influence of the military kept increasing as that of political parties and parliament decreased. Society was increasingly subjected to surveillance, radio and press to censorship, and a government-controlled news agency called Domei was established in order to present Japan's policies in East Asia more favourably than the international news agencies which had dominated reporting on Japan until then (Jansen 2002, pp. 600–605; Klein 2017, pp. 391–397, 401–406). In November 1936, Japan and Germany concluded the Anti-Comintern Pact that with Italy's inclusion a year later would constitute "the Axis".

Now relations in the field of research intensified too. An increasing number of Japanese guests were visiting Germany – delegations of Japanese medical and legal scholars as well as of athletes, artists, journalists, officials of youth organizations and of the Japanese political right wing. Chikao Fujisawa, for example, one of Japan's most prominent right-wing intellectuals, visited Germany in 1937 as did Count Yoshinori Futara, leader of the All-Japanese Youth Association, who came again in 1938. Nobutaka Shio-den, a leader of the small group of Japanese anti-Semites, went to Germany on several occasions and visited Julius Streicher, editor of the anti-Semitic weekly *Der Stürmer*. According to Goebbels, all of them were primarily interested in how National Socialists dealt with "propaganda, practical socialism, and modern mass leadership" (Goebbels 1993, I/4, p. 329). Right-wing Japanese and National Socialists were joined in their opposition against democracy, liberalism and bolshevism, and in their support of authoritarianism and territorial expansion.

Germany now began sending prominent scholars on year-long visits to Japan where they were expected to promote the "new Germany". The first, in 1937, was the internationally renowned Berlin educator and philosopher Eduard Spranger. He was not a Nazi, but propagated National Socialism by artfully avoiding this term and the name Hitler. Spranger is perhaps a good example of the "treason" committed by intellectuals under National Socialism. His many lectures throughout the country enjoyed favourable public response, as he could be regarded as a representative of both pre National-Socialist Germany which many Japanese scientists and scholars had learned to love, and of the "new" Germany as well. Spranger was followed in 1938 by a delegation of the Hitlerjugend. They visited schools and universities throughout the country, met with Japanese youth in a camp at the foot of Mount Fuji, and attracted great public attention. An official of the Reichsjugendführung which administered the Hitlerjugend remained in Tokyo in order to establish structured relations with Japanese youth organizations.

The mutual visits were accompanied by massive National Socialist propaganda in Japan and the promotion of Japan in Germany. After 1936, more



books and articles about Japan were published in Germany than ever before. There were translations of Japanese books into German and German films and plays that took place in Japan. Many of them dealt with alleged similarities and affinities – historical, political, social, cultural and sometimes even racial ones – between Japan and Germany in order to acquaint German citizens with their new ally in the Far East. Efforts were also made to familiarize Germans with elements of everyday life in Japan, such as Japanese food and the Go game. Attempts to expand Japanese studies at German universities did however not gain political support. In Japan, the German government intensified its promotion of National Socialism by staging huge exhibitions, exporting films, among them Leni Riefenstahl's films on the party convention 1934 and the Olympic Games in Berlin 1936, and by publishing Japanese translations of National Socialist literature.

In November 1938, Germany and Japan signed a cultural agreement providing “a systematic advancement of relations in all fields of science, art, music, literature, film, radio, youth movements, and sports” (Bieber 2014, p. 612). Now ambitious exchange programmes were being fostered, in particular for youths, students and young academics, but also for musicians and artists, master-craftsmen, civil servants and members of *Kraft durch Freude*, the Nazi leisure organization. In Germany, DJG and Reichsstudentenführung, the national student's organization, established contacts with the association of Japanese students in Germany founded in 1938. Supported by the *Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst* (German Academic Exchange Service), in early 1939, they organized the first annual meeting of Japanese students and researchers living in Germany and German students and researchers.

In Tokyo, the German director of the JGCI, Walter Donat, who was also “cultural supervisor” (*Kulturwart*) of the Nazi Party in Japan and head of the Japanese branch of the NSLB, tried to transform the JGCI into an instrument of German propaganda. In 1939, Otto Koellreutter, a professor in Munich for constitutional law and a confirmed Nazi, came to Japan as Spranger's successor and, too, gave lectures all over the country.

All of these projects were aimed at establishing a social framework for long-term political co-operation between Germany and Japan and at helping both societies to create an elite that would be able to continue and deepen such co-operation in the future. It may be worth noting that all of these plans were designed bilaterally, that is, without the third partner of the “Axis”, Italy.

### **Response to National Socialism among Japanese scientists and scholars prior to the Second World War**

Until the outbreak of war in Europe in 1939, response to National Socialism among Japanese scientists and scholars seems to have been limited to certain groups. The most extensive formal relations between German and Japanese researchers were established in that field where such ties had the longest tradition, namely in medicine. In the summer of 1939, the

Reichsärztekammer (National Chamber of Physicians) and the Japanese–German Medical Association signed an agreement of co-operation. Perhaps, it was an attempt to bring co-operation under tighter political control. How far Japanese physicians supported specific aims of National Socialist “health” policies, in genetics and eugenics for example, remains to be studied. Since the late 19th century, a comparatively strong movement involving nationalist-minded physicians, scientists and journalists in Japan had been promoting racial “improvement” along with modern nation-building. They rejected the idea of mixed marriages between Japanese and non-Japanese individuals, organized “hygiene exhibitions”, eugenics-based marriage counselling centers, and in certain cases supported sterilization (Robertson 2010). But concrete Japanese–German collaboration in these areas does not seem to have developed during the 1930s. Choei Ishibashi, president of the Japanese International Medical Association and the Japanese–German Medical Society, avoided remarking on eugenic policy when he visited Germany in 1938. Historical research has not yet produced evidence of any co-operation between Japanese and German experts before the Second World War (Sachse 2003; Schmuhl 2005; Harten *et al.* 2006; Robertson 2010). This may even have been prevented by the conviction on each side of its racial superiority to the other.

In 1939, Koellreutter negotiated another agreement of co-operation among legal experts. Since Japan’s domestic policy became more and more authoritarian, there was increasing interest in Japan in institutional and social law as practiced in National Socialist Germany. Particular attention was given to the writings of Koellreutter and Carl Schmitt, especially to their work on international law. Several Japanese members of the legal profession became members of the Akademie für Deutsches Recht (Academy for German Law) in Munich; others wrote their dissertation with Koellreutter or were involved in translating National Socialist writings dealing with law into Japanese. The extent of the actual correspondence between German and Japanese legal experts remains unclear, however. In public law, for example, the concept of the *Tenno* differed fundamentally from that of the German *Führer*. For National Socialist legal experts, the *Führer* was the supreme constitutional institution, while for the Japanese, the godlike *Tenno* ranked above all political institutions and represented the state as a whole. The degree to which Japanese legal experts were interested in National Socialist criminal and civil law requires further investigation as well, as does the question of how many Japanese as a whole were interested in National Socialist law.

The positive interest in National Socialism among members of the legal profession in Japan did not include the movement’s anti-Semitism. Two Japanese legal experts, who visited Berlin in 1937, inquired as to the site of Alfred Mosse’s grave and placed a wreath there. Mosse, a German legal expert of Jewish origin, had provided legal advice to the Japanese government 50 years earlier and was remembered in Japan, while in Germany his



name was no longer mentioned (Mosse and Mosse 1995, p. 36). In Japan, some professors of law refused to meet with Koellreutter (Barshay 1988, p. 49). In addition, between 1936 and 1939, books written by the German legal scholars Hans Kelsen and Georg Jellinek, whose works were prohibited in Germany on account of the authors' Jewish background, were translated into Japanese. Some of those who participated in the translation of National Socialist legal writings into Japanese were opposed to National Socialism and to the authoritarian course that Japan's domestic policy was taking; probably such translations protected them from persecution.

Among Japanese experts of German culture, the response to National Socialism appears to have been relatively positive. After the Anti-Comintern Pact and the cultural agreement between Japan and Germany, their publications showed increased attraction to National-Socialist ideas and German *völkische* literature. Translations of such literature into Japanese were on the rise as well. But again they did not necessarily reflect the ideological views of their translators. Kyoshi Naruse, a professor of German studies in Kyoto, had a number of students who were known to be opposed to National Socialism translate an anthology of National Socialist literature, presumably in order to protect them from the police. And until the end of the 1930s, most Japanese translations of contemporary German literature were of authors that had been banned in Germany, e.g. Thomas Mann, Hermann Hesse and Stefan Zweig. The largest Japanese edition of Goethe's works was published between 1936 and 1940, supervised by Kinji Kimura, professor of the Imperial University Tokyo and president of the Japanese Goethe-Association (Seki 1998). Japanese Germanists continued to discuss those authors in class and disassociated themselves from German organizations which they suspected of wanting to inculcate them with National Socialist ideas. In January 1939, the Japanese chapter of the NSLB invited 50 Japanese scholars of German language and literature to a meeting with German lecturers. Eighteen of those invited replied, 13 accepted the invitation, and finally only six appeared, despite the fact that the meeting was conducted by a German lecturer who was not at all known to be a supporter of National Socialism – a clear indication of the distance which many Japanese experts of German culture kept towards National Socialism, and perhaps a gesture of silent protest.

Other Japanese professionals with an academic background seem to have disassociated themselves from National Socialism even more. Japanese engineers and natural scientists who worked in Germany as visiting scholars were suspected of conducting military and industrial espionage rather than supporting National Socialism. Japanese researchers in engineering who invited German colleagues were more interested in technical expertise for military purposes than in National Socialist ideology. Possible co-operative efforts in agriculture, a field important to the Third Reich's relations with other countries, have not been studied to date. No attempts seem at the time to have been made to probe assertions, appearing in National Socialist publications, of racial kinship between Germans and Japanese.



Response to National Socialism among Japanese philosophers has not yet been studied comprehensively either. The most important Japanese philosopher of that time, Kitaro Nishida in Kyoto, was convinced of the superiority of Japanese thought to that of the West. Thanks to Eduard Spranger who met him in 1937, some of Nishida's writings were published in German translation during the Third Reich (Nishida 1943) – a kind of contraband of National Socialist cultural and scientific policy in Japan, because the sub-text of Nishida's writings contained ideas contrary to National Socialist ideology.

The response to National Socialism among vanguards of Japan's political right seems to have been limited by a strong sense of nationalism. Fujisawa, for example, saw "a striking similarity" between Japanese and National Socialist political concepts but emphasized the distinctiveness of Japanese culture and was fundamentally convinced of its superiority (Fujisawa 1936, pp. 21–23). There is still no evidence that representatives of Japan's right wing formed networks with their German counterparts.

The same applies for relations between Japanese Zen Buddhists and National Socialists. But obviously there was a mutual appeal. Some Nazis, in particular the SS, were fascinated by the Samurai and their discipline and fighting spirit, which were based on Zen Buddhism. These Nazis were however not interested in Zen Buddhism as a spiritual phenomenon; instead, they saw it as "part of a folk-nationalist ethos" (Bichler 1936, p. 357) and of the "strong will" to sacrifice individualism to a "higher" idea (Corazza 1937, p. 151).

Japanese living in Germany remained largely uninvolved in the manufacture of German–Japanese kinship, and instead sought to set Japanese culture off from German culture by emphasizing its uniqueness. Japanese students in Germany were unwilling to be indoctrinated politically, and at the first meeting of German and Japanese academics in 1939, they showed little understanding for the political opinions of their German counterparts. One of them observed in a letter to Tokyo an "indifference in the new Germany towards science" and predicted a decrease in research in Germany "because everything had to serve political purposes" (quoted in Bieber 2014, p. 626).

There are various reasons why the majority of Japanese professionals with an academic background appear to have disassociated themselves from National Socialism. First, older scholars adhered to Western ideas that they had been familiar with for decades. As late as 1941, Donat reported that Kimura "continued to be a strong advocate of liberal ideas", and possessed "little understanding of the Jewish question and the problem of emigrants in German literature" (quoted in Bieber 2014, p. 784). Second, an understanding towards National Socialist anti-Semitism was generally lacking in Japan, one reason being that only very few Jews lived in Japan. In early 1939, the press officer of the German embassy in Tokyo reported that "a Jewish question [as it was called in Nazi Germany] was practically

nonexistent” in Japan (quoted in Bieber 2014, p. 669). A third reason why many Japanese professionals with an academic background disassociated themselves from National Socialism may have been the arrogance and the attitude of superiority which German representatives of National Socialism occasionally displayed. Exchange programmes planned after the cultural agreement in Germany did not require a command of Japanese for German participants but as a matter of course assumed that Japanese participants had learned German. Similarly, members of the Hitlerjugend visiting Japan in 1938 made disparaging remarks concerning traditional Japanese furniture, clothing and not least food: “We preferred German sausages with army bread”, one of them noted in his travel diary (Ross 1939, p. 21).

A final reason why many younger Japanese scholars, but many older ones as well, dissociated themselves from National Socialism was that Japan’s expansion in East Asia from the mid-1930s onward created an atmosphere of nationalism and chauvinism and fostered both the conviction of the superiority of Japanese culture and the Japanese political concept of *kokutai*. “Japanese megalomania” was beginning “to increase endlessly”, a German lecturer wrote to his mother in Berlin in October 1937; the Japanese were beginning to assume “that foreigners were expendable and that their culture was far superior to the European one” (Bieber 2014, p. 492). In 1938, the economist Kurt Singer, one of the last German visiting professors in Japan and of Jewish background – certainly no Nazi – observed in Tokyo an atmosphere “in which a European could no longer breathe”; “one seemed to regard the simple presence of foreigners as a defilement of Japanese soil” (Singer 1957, p. 603).

### German–Japanese research relations during the Second World War

Nearly all exchange projects, as well as German promotion of National Socialism in Japan, came to a sudden end when the National Socialist regime provoked war in Europe in September 1939. The majority of Japanese students and scientists living in Germany left the country. They did so not only due to the insecurity caused by the outbreak of war, but primarily because the Molotov–Ribbentrop pact had been concluded with no prior information given to Japan, which caused German–Japanese relations to freeze. The signing of a bilateral agreement of co-operation between legal experts was then apparently abandoned. After Germany’s victory over France in the spring of 1940, German–Japanese relations slowly recovered, eventually making the Dutch and French colonies in South East Asia easy prey for Japan. In September 1940, Germany, Japan and Italy concluded the Three-Power Pact.

The further realization of exchange projects, though, was prevented by the fact that most young men in both countries had now been conscripted. Few scientists and scholars continued to travel from Germany to Japan and vice versa. In 1940, delegations of German students, athletes and the Deutsche Arbeitsfront (German Labour Front) travelled to Japan, to



participate in the ceremonies and festivities marking the 2600th anniversary of the Japanese dynasty; perhaps, they also went to establish connections with corresponding Japanese organizations in the hope of revitalizing such networks after the war. In the same year, a delegation of Japanese medical experts travelled to Germany, and in 1941 followed yet another. In that year, some Japanese scientists went to Germany as well, among them Enryo Hojo, a biological weapons expert who was appointed attaché of the Japanese embassy.

In both countries, bilateral cultural committees continued to discuss exchange programmes that might be developed after the war. Meetings between German and Japanese academics also continued. In Germany, a second such meeting took place in Tirol in early 1940 and in Japan the first one in the spring of 1940 at Lake Kawaguchi at the foot of Mount Fuji. An extensive programme was adopted which provided inter alia for more student exchange. At the same time, Donat failed to transform the JGCI into an instrument of German propaganda, and, thanks to Japanese board members, the institute's periodical, published since 1940, became much less an instrument of German propaganda than he had intended. The Japanese responded negatively to other German requests. They agreed to appoint German lecturers only with German consent. But when German diplomats tried to persuade them to prevent German scholars with a Jewish background from teaching in Japan, a high ranking official replied that, as science was international, "not every German-speaking Jew who taught an academic discipline" should be regarded as a representative of German culture (Bieber 2014, p. 696).

The mutual interest that arose between Japanese Zen Buddhists on the one hand and National Socialists on the other during the war is particularly worth noting. The delegation of the Hitlerjugend which went to Japan in 1940 paid a visit to one of the oldest Zen monasteries in Japan, the Eihei-ji. The monks described this as "something that hadn't been seen since the founding of the monastery", and obviously hoped that Buddhism could contribute to the development of "a new religion that could fully satisfy the German people" (Victoria 2016). The members of the Hitlerjugend delegation, however, did not seem to have been impressed by their visit to the monastery (Bieber 2016). But in spring of 1941, a German translation of a book by Daisetz Suzuki, the best known interpreter of Zen Buddhism at the time, was published. He called it "a religion of the will" which could "befriend anarchist, fascist, communist, or democratic ideals as well as atheism or idealism, any political or economic dogma" (Suzuki 1941, p. 49, 51), in short a suitable religion for ideological warriors of any kind. The South German edition of the *Völkischer Beobachter* quoted at length from the book, placing special emphasis on the samurai's readiness to die. In Tokyo, Suzuki frequently visited the German Embassy and lectured at the JGCI in order to foster relations between Japan and National Socialist Germany on a spiritual level. Count Karlfried von Dürckheim, a German psychologist

who had come to Japan in 1938 to promote National Socialism, met Suzuki several times, and publicly claimed that Buddhism and National Socialism had several attributes in common (Victoria 2014).

In June 1941, exchange between Japan and Germany stopped because the German attack on the Soviet Union severed the last line of communication via the Trans-Siberian railway. Both countries now attempted to maintain relations between their students via essay competitions and similar events. In Germany, meetings between German and Japanese academics continued until 1944, but there is no evidence of actual collaboration.

The activities of Japanese scientists and scholars in Germany during the last years of the war are only partly known. Some lecturers participated in the promotion of Japan which now was strongly intensified, but often emphasized the difference between Japanese and German culture. Whether collaboration in the development of biological and chemical weapons existed remains unclear (Martin 2006). There is however evidence of co-operation in the field of eugenics. It is unclear whether this was linked to the preparation of Japan's National Eugenics Law modelled on the first German racial hygiene law of 1933 and passed by parliament in 1940 (Robertson 2010, p. 439). In 1941, the Japanese embassy in Berlin and the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Institut for anthropology began to co-operate in research on the "racial consciousness of East Asians". Psychologists Masaji Kamitake and Masataka Kagaki seem to have worked on the "racial reputation of mongoloid peoples in the racial consciousness of Japanese", possibly as part of a larger study on "East Asian peoples and races" begun by the Japanese Academy of Sciences in 1941 (Bieber 2014, pp. 843–844); yet, it is unknown whether any results were produced.

After a member of the SS had been appointed director of the cultural department of the Foreign Office in 1943, the Nazi Party and the SS made preparations for a post-war world order dominated by Germany and Japan. In 1944/45, new chairs for Japanese studies were established even though most universities had been closed for a long time; the last appointment occurred in January of 1945. In 1944, the SS established a secret institute for East Asian studies in Berlin in which Japan was intended to play an important role. It was designed to be a mix between a research institute and an intelligence agency. The Japanese were not informed about its existence, much less invited to participate. Soon after the foundation, however, allied bombs destroyed the residence of the institute in the centre of Berlin; months later, it found a new home in Karlsbad, in former Czechoslovakia; presumably it was barely able to begin serious work in either Berlin or Karlsbad.

In Japan, interest in the European allies weakened after the attack on Pearl Harbour, while nationalism and xenophobia increased. Japan's scientific and cultural policy now focused increasingly on that area of the world, which was referred to in Japan as the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere of the future. Further meetings of Japanese and German academics in Japan did not occur. Whether the few German scientists and scholars



remaining in Japan collaborated with Japanese colleagues and, if so, in which fields is unknown. The same applies for the activities of the JGCI during the last years of the war. Donat travelled to Berlin in the spring of 1941 for instructions, but was unable to return when the last line of communication with Japan was severed. A new building for the institute was inaugurated in 1943, but destroyed only one year later by American bombs, thus bringing its activities to an end. The institute in Kyoto remained active until the end of the war, but apparently more as a meeting place for Germans living in Japan than for German National Socialists and like-minded Japanese.

At least one German scholar built a private network during those years, namely Dietrich Seckel. He had come to Japan as a lecturer in German in 1936 and opposed National Socialism, as did probably his Japanese collaborators. He spent the war researching the history of Japanese art, and later became the first German full professor of history of East Asian art, at the University of Heidelberg. Count Dürckheim, who after the German attack on the Soviet Union could not return home, established ties with politicians and military leaders as well as Buddhists belonging to Japan's political extreme right wing (Victoria 2014). But the extent of the Germany embassy's involvement in Dürckheim's activities is unknown, the reaction of the Japanese public to his publications, too.

### **The end of German–Japanese scientific relations in 1945**

Germany's surrender in May 1945 ended its research relations with Japan. In Japan, according to the unpublished memoirs of German lecturer in Osaka, Robert Schinzinger, Germany's surrender was seen as a result of the National Socialist's racial hubris and arrogance. They had lacked "fighting spirit" (*Kampfgeist*), while Japanese culture – *bushidô* and *kokutai*, or the "Asian spirit" – had proven superior (cf. Shillony 1981, pp. 153–154; Koltermann 2009, pp. 176–180; Bieber 2014, p. 1063). In Germany, interest in the Japanese ally seems to have vanished once Germany had surrendered. An expert on Japanese culture, Wilhelm Gundert, who in 1946 approached a renowned German publishing house to offer a book on Japan was given the answer: "the country of our former ally has drifted so far away from our inner awareness that publishing a book about it was hardly worthwhile" (Hans Harrassowitz to Wilhelm Gundert, 14 June 1946, quoted in Bieber 2014, p. 1087).

In the 1950s, research collaboration between Japan and the now divided Germany was gradually resumed. Hardly anyone of those who had been involved between 1933 and 1945 took part – they were now too old or had lost their positions. Only in medicine were old connections revitalized. When the University of Freiburg observed the 500th anniversary of its founding in 1957, Choei Ishibashi, still president of the Japanese International Medical Association, was among the foreign guests and was appointed honorary senator. Otherwise, co-operation appears to have been reestablished

between West-Germany and Japan on a basis that largely excluded individuals who had been involved in such contacts between 1933 and 1945.

## Summary

Relations between Germany and Japan in research date back to the last decades of the 19th century, when German experts helped Japan to modernize and young Japanese came to Germany to study. These relations continued until 1933, particularly in medicine and law. Although political relations between Germany and Japan then strengthened, the reaction of Japanese academics to the beginnings of National Socialist rule in Germany was largely negative.

After the signing of the Anti-Comintern Pact in 1936, Germany tried to intensify relations with Japan in research and culture and also to engage athletes, artists, journalists and leaders of mass organizations. Exchange programmes were aimed at young people in particular in order to create a future elite that would promote long-term political co-operation between the two countries.

Before the outbreak of war in Europe in 1939, Japanese interest in National Socialism seems to have been limited to certain groups, like jurists and experts of German culture. Although Germany and Japan became allies in 1940, a deepening of relations in research and culture was prevented by wartime conditions in all but a few cases. After the war, scientific and scholarly collaboration between West-Germany and Japan was resumed, but largely excluding individuals who had been involved in such contacts between 1933 and 1945.

## Notes

- 1 This essay is based on my study of the cultural relations between Germany and Japan during the Nazi era (Bieber 2014). References to the book are made only if quotations are given. Japanese names are rendered in Western style, i.e. the family name is given second rather than first, as would be the case in Japanese style.
- 2 In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler called the Japanese only “culture bearing” (*kulturtragend*) in contrast to the “culture creating” (*kulturschöpferisch*) Aryans. Long ago, he wrote, the Japanese had lost the “originally creative racial core” (*ursprünglich schöpferischer Rassenkern*), their culture was “ossified” (*verknöchert*) and “totally frozen” (*vollkommen erstarrt*). Only the “Aryan wave of culture” (*arische Kulturwelle*) in the second half of the 19th century roused Japan; but Japan would sink back into its slumber if further Aryan influence ceased (Hitler 1933, vol. 1, pp. 318–319).

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## 6 Between competition, co-operation and collaboration

### The International Committee of Historical Sciences, the International Historical Congresses and German historiography, 1933–1945

*Matthias Berg*

In November 1939, the German doyen of the so-called *Ostforschung*, Albert Brackmann, decided to delay the publication of an article on the “History of the East” that had been commissioned by the *Historische Zeitschrift*. Immediately after the start of the war, he had written what he described as “a response to the historians of Poznan”, but now, after some of these Polish historians had been arrested, he felt it advisable to “frame his response differently” (Brackmann, A. 17 November 1939, to Müller, Karl Alexander von [letter] Personal archive of Brackmann, 22. Berlin: Geheimes Staatsarchiv (GStA)). The relationship between German and Polish historians had unquestionably reached its terminus: even the radical *Ostforscher* Brackmann considered it inappropriate to continue a public and routine scholarly debate after his Polish peers had been rounded up and sent to concentration camps.

The German invasion and occupation of Poland and other European countries undermined the very foundation of the international relationships German academics had forged in those nations, and called into question their ties to the academic communities in states not yet occupied. Consequently, with regard to their integration into the international community, the caesura the war represented for the scholars of Nazi Germany can hardly be overstated. Even if hopes for an “international republic of scholars” years earlier had proven to be a mirage, the violent suppression of opposing views not only endangered international relations, it ended them. Of course, the war did not put an end to scholarship; international contacts were maintained and co-operation continued. But the notion of international relations that had developed between historians of different national traditions since the start of the 20th century, though often adversarial, was predicated on a free exchange of ideas. In a letter sent to his German colleague Karl Brandi in the summer of 1942, the Danish historian Aage Friis summarized this view: He couldn’t imagine that “even one

significant historian from the Nordic countries would be willing to resume academic, organized co-operation under the current circumstances”, as had been the norm in the 1920s (Friis, A. 8 September 1942, to Brandt, Karl [letter] Personal archive of Brandt, 1. Göttingen: Niedersächsische Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek (NSUB)). Friis, who had studied German history and for a long time had cultivated relationships with German historians, abandoned all hope for a continuation of collaborative work. I would thus like to illustrate the possibilities for, and limits of, the cultivation of international scholarly relationships in Nazi Germany (culminating in their end as diagnosed by Friis) while taking into account the parameters – competition, co-operation and collaboration – under which these relationships functioned.

### **Preconditions: historiography in its international context up to 1933**

When National Socialism took over German science in 1933, it inherited the international relationships that had been re-forged in an arduous process after the First World War. Around the turn of the 20th century, in a development akin to the rise of world trade fairs and congresses, historians had informally begun to organize international conferences whose common denominator was their popularity with the public and a lack of thematic coherence. In a veritable *tour de force*, conferences were successively held in the capitals of Europe, beginning with The Hague in 1898 and followed by Paris, Rome, Berlin, and finally London in 1913, one year before the start of the First World War. In a parallel development, conference series and associations were established on a national level, the larger countries having completed this process by 1900, smaller nations following suit soon thereafter. This process did not preclude the establishment of close links among historians across national boundaries, as exemplified by reciprocal invitations to national conferences or by international participation in national endeavours, such as the Belgian historian Henri Pirenne's involvement in Karl Lamprecht's historical-geographic research projects. Other examples include Lamprecht's membership in the American Historical Association, invitations extended to German historians by American universities to be visiting professors after 1900, and of course a scholarly interest in the histories of nations other than one's own – in Germany, English history in particular was in vogue. In short, the international connections of historians formed a broad spectrum.

Historical developments are rarely sudden; there are precursors and indicators that foreshadow change. For scholars of history, however, international relationships that, while always serving to reaffirm a sense of national identity had never been called into question, ended precipitously with the start of the First World War. By October 1914 at the latest, when the notorious so-called Manifesto of the Ninety-Three (whose signatories included a number of German historians) was published, the course of the war and German war



guilt became indelibly and, considering its contribution to the propaganda campaign, rightly associated with German historiography. Nevertheless, the immediate repercussions of the Reich's defeat for German historians (the boycott of German science, lack of material resources, and exclusion from international organizations and events) were tolerable and temporary – most sanctions were lifted in the first half of the 1920s. The long-term consequences of Germany's isolation from the international world of scholarship, however, extended well into the Nazi period. In this sense, perhaps, 1914 and 1918 represent more dramatic breaks than 1933.

The Belgian Pirenne, who up until 1914 had taken part in almost every German *Historikertag* convention, was particularly adamant in his opposition to German (and Austrian) participation in the first International Congress of Historical Sciences after the war, held in Brussels in 1923, indeed without the Germans. However, the protests of the latter against their exclusion did not fall on deaf ears, particularly in Scandinavia, but in the Anglo-Saxon world as well. Germany was allowed to participate in the founding of the International Committee of Historical Sciences in 1926 and in the International Congress of 1928 held in Oslo. Germany played a central role in the establishment of the commissions attached to the International Committee, but was not able to assume the position it had held before 1914. In the 1920s, German historical science could not divorce itself from the war and its consequences, especially the Versailles Treaty and the question of war guilt. When Germany had secured a role in the newly founded International Historical Bibliography, German representatives demanded that it should “not follow current international borders”. This way, they let the German ministry of the interior know, it would be possible to “include research on Germans in areas that are not or no longer a part of the German Reich within the framework of German historical scholarship and thereby emphasize the cultural unity of the German people” (Reincke-Bloch, H. 4 June 1926, to Reichsministerium des Innern [letter] Personal archive of Brandt, 31. Göttingen: NSUB). National representation was no longer a welcome side effect of international involvement; instead, it was the primary goal of the cultural propaganda so assiduously promoted by Weimar Republic institutions keen on bolstering not only the academic, but also the national standing of Germany. However, the desire to exert influence rather than participate in scholarly dialogue, compounded by German insecurities, precluded an international exchange among equals. When the aforementioned Aage Friis, who was researching the Danish-German War, in 1925 requested access to the political archives of the German foreign ministry in order to challenge the findings of the historian Walter Platzhoff, he was denied. Friedrich Meinecke feared that the affair would end “in embarrassment for the foreign ministry and [...] German scholarship” (cited in Meinecke 2012, pp. 273–274). Thus, when the national socialists ascended to power in 1933, mistrust and rivalry had already clouded the international relations of German historical science.

### **An undesired inheritance: National Socialism and international relations in historiography**

One reason for the unrelenting approach of German historians, whose cachet as scholars gave them some sway with the International Committee, was the designated host city for the International Congress of 1933: the Polish capital, Warsaw. Preparations for German participation – and the question of whether participation was advisable at all – consumed German historians for years. As early as November 1931, Karl Brandi had made it clear that a German presence in Warsaw was “merely a matter of national duty. [ – – – ] We plan to participate only because we do not want to leave the East to the French without a fight” (Brandi, K. 4 November 1931, to Brackmann, Albert [letter] Personal archive of Brandi, 44. Göttingen: NSUB). Brandi’s display of determination was really designed to shore up support among wavering colleagues whose interest in international co-operation was flagging. The Austrian historian Wilhelm Erben, for one, believed that participation in Warsaw would damage “the dignity of German scholarship” (Erben, W. 11 November 1931, to Brackmann, Albert [letter] Personal archive of Brackmann, 74. Berlin: GStA). Since the mid-1920s, Brandi had established himself as the most influential German historian with regard to international relations; he was a leading figure in the International Committee and became its vice president in 1933. A year earlier he had become the chairman of the German historical association and thus held two key positions at once.

As a moderate nationalist and respected medievalist, Brandi functioned as a buffer in all directions. The regime did not have a clear position regarding international co-operation in the sciences. As long as its primary goals – to create a genuinely National Socialist leadership elite and to secure a scientific contribution to Germany’s rearmament – were not affected, the relevant agencies in party and government avoided involvement in this fraught area. Thus, the debates surrounding German participation in Warsaw remained unaffected by the political caesura of 1933. For the moment, the pros and cons continued to be framed in terms, recognizable since the early 1920s, of the relative advantages of international exchange versus nationalist isolation.

But that changes were afoot that would not leave German science and scholarship unaffected would become clear in the coming months, and the question of how to confront this development became an ever more pressing problem. Regarding Warsaw, for instance, Gerhard Ritter took the view that the position that “in the East the national interest should be the deciding factor, not the question of *Volk*, [...] not the issue of race”, had become untenable in the current political climate (Ritter, G. 30 April 1933, to Brandi, Karl [letter] Personal archive of Brandi, 44. Göttingen: NSUB). In the end, however, German historians went to Warsaw, a decision that was supported by Nazi authorities in light of ongoing negotiations on the German–Polish Nonaggression Pact. The departure of the German



delegation from Warsaw not only put an end to the drawn-out, both controversial and contradictory discussions relating to German participation, it also marked one of the most surprising shifts in the foreign policy and cultural politics of the still young Nazi regime. A German boycott would have had drastic consequences, as would a public, on stage confrontation. Instead, the – according to the official count – seventh International Congress in the Polish capital went off without a hitch, the “*courtoisie* of the scholars towards each other, the reciprocal respect [...] was not called into question by a single false note” (Erdmann 1987, p. 190). Many emphasized the remarkably collegial atmosphere in Warsaw. It seems that the long lead-up to the Congress had given both sides ample opportunity to air out their grievances, sparing the event itself an open confrontation. It was not only Nazi Germany, but also fascist Italy and the Soviet Union that seriously called into question the idealistic notion of an International of Scholars.

Warsaw saw the International Committee gain stature and thereby strengthen its influence on the organization of the Congresses. The national committees, too, played an important role, sometimes pre-empting certain plans. The question of war guilt remained off limits, Austrian efforts to put it on the agenda notwithstanding. The organizers succeeded, in the words of Erdmann (1987, p. 204), in “building dykes that prevented the waves of political discord from disturbing the calm waters” of the Congress. Despite the economic downturn, a few more active participants (1,031) were counted than at Oslo. Polish participation was particularly strong, as was that of the French, whose 108-member delegation was almost double that of neighbouring Germany. The space given the history of the host country was unusual; the young Polish nation state was represented to an extent that was, and would remain, unprecedented. Unsurprisingly, the nation state remained the main reference point at the Congress, while methodological discussions were few and far between. The Soviet delegation managed to make its presence felt beyond the scheduling of a special session on the “History of Social Movements” featuring exclusively Soviet participants; the dissension between Western and Marxist historians with regard to German–Polish relations prompted more intense discussions than an insular German perspective could have anticipated (Erdmann 1987, pp. 202–220). The German historians returned home unexpectedly satisfied. As Brandi made clear in the *Historische Zeitschrift*, the Congress’ “immediate scholarly impact [...] wasn’t exactly overwhelming”. However, the shift of German historiography in preparation of the Congress, a “move toward the problems of Slavic culture and state history”, could prove consequential (Brandi 1934). This allowed Brandi, irrespective of the goals this new orientation was to achieve, to give himself credit first and foremost for having pointed his colleagues in the right direction. He intended to preserve the institutional success that participation in the Warsaw Congress documented in future debates related to international cooperation: “If we don’t act others will have the advantage”, he wrote, and “our scholarly reputation demands



that we act”(Brandi, K. 30 September 1933, to Preußisches Kultusministerium [letter] Holdings I. HA Rep. 76 Vc Sekt. 1 Tit. XI Teil VI Nr. 13, Volume 3. Berlin: GStA). The right balance between competition and co-operation, it seemed, had been found. Those who recused themselves from competition out of arrogance, Brandi and fellow supporters of international engagement argued, would lose by default and give up all opportunity for collaboration.

In the wake of the success Warsaw represented, Brandi and his supporters attempted to ensure that international co-operation had a future for German scholarship. “Our scholarly credibility is our strongest international asset”, Brandi assured the chairman of the Verband der Hochschullehrer der Geographie (Association of German Academic Geographers). “Translating the deeper meaning of the German movement to foreigners” could only be achieved by participating, he told the geographers on their way to an international conference in Warsaw in 1934 (Brandi, K. 28 October 1933, to Mecking, Ludwig Karl [letter] Personal archive of Brandi, 47. Göttingen: NSUB). Maintaining his complicated dual role, Brandi emphasized the national advantages of participation before a German audience while applauding the prospects for continued co-operation in his correspondence with the general secretary of the International Committee. The Warsaw Congress “was the great test of our organization” (Brandi, K. 28 September 1933, to Lheritier, Michel [letter] Personal archive of Brandi, 39. Göttingen: NSUB). Gerhard Ritter, who had garnered a lot of attention for his presentation at the Congress, also wanted to make clear to the authorities the “irreplaceable value of the foreign policy impact that is at stake when we speak of the external and internal independence of German scholarship”. Privately, Ritter gave his mentor Hermann Oncken an impression of his experiences in Warsaw: “Almost three weeks abroad, amid a host of historians from all over – that is something really special nowadays” (Ritter, G. 9 September 1933, to Brandi, Karl [letter] Personal archive of Brandi, 44. Göttingen: NSUB; Ritter, G. 1 October 1933, to Oncken, Hermann [letter] Personal archive of Oncken, 462, Oldenburg: Niedersächsisches Landesarchiv).

Of course, even in Warsaw, the German presence could not pass without any conflict. It was not by accident that Aage Friis sought to make Nazi minister of the interior Wilhelm Frick’s policy initiatives regarding schools a subject of the discussion of the school book commission, the proceedings of which were closely observed internationally. The German participants succeeded in preventing this, but that they often assumed contradictory positions depending on whom they were talking to and in what context, became clear nonetheless. Their own doubts about international co-operation were pitted against the inchoate policies of the new regime, which in turn had to be defended against the antagonistic views of a critical international community. Their own scholarship was called into question both abroad (for instance, by Polish historians) and at home by an ever more influential Nazi historiography. At a speech held at a ceremony at the University of

Göttingen on the anniversary of the founding of Bismarck's *Reich* in 1934, Ulrich Kahrstedt, professor of ancient history, attacked the international co-operation in the sciences generally and the presence of a German delegation at the International Congress specifically. In his highly aggressive speech, Kahrstedt denied that this kind of co-operation had any value, accused the participants personally of betraying German interests and of collaborating with the national and academic enemy. Explicitly referencing the meeting of the International Committee in Göttingen in 1927 as well as the Congress in Warsaw, he directly attacked his department colleagues Brandi and Schramm. Kahrstedt ended his address with the oft-quoted oath: "We reject international science; we reject the international republic of scholars, we reject research for research's sake" (Wegeler 1996, pp. 147–162; Reitemeier 2011, pp. 128–131).

Brandi's helplessness in light of this attack from a member of his own department, frenetically applauded by the students, is illustrated by his immediate reaction: In the office of the university president, he challenged Kahrstedt to a duel. The latter declined, and subsequent efforts by Brandi to get satisfaction were thwarted in the face of associations of students and professors, daily newspapers and periodicals that all carried the National Socialist banner. The established rules, which hadn't precluded nationalist and chauvinist attacks, did not apply to the new actors; here Brandi could only lose. Neither a message of support from the university, nor Kahrstedt's formal apology, nor the latter's censure by the *Reich* minister of the interior personally could change the conclusion Brandi drew from reading a student article. He told a confidant in the ministry of the interior that the article shows "the frightening way in which the seed Kahrstedt planted has blossomed in these young souls. They have neither the worldliness, nor the human judgment, to see through Kahrstedt's radicalism" (Brandi, K. [no date], to Donnevert, Max [letter] Personal archive of Brandi, 56. Göttingen: NSUB).

The extent of Brandi's faith in international co-operation, despite its lack of impact on scholarship, is illustrated by his efforts to fend off the damage to which Kahrstedt aspired. The national socialist authorities may not have supported Kahrstedt's vitriol, but who in the future would dare seek to represent Germany internationally, knowing that such attacks from colleagues could be forthcoming at home, undermining their standing abroad? A few days after the Göttingen events, Brandi's colleague Percy Ernst Schramm received an invitation to a lecture series in Rome that the Dutch historian Johan Huizinga was also planning to attend. Such lectures were popular for the duration of the Nazi period among both academics and government officials, providing as they did the opportunity for subtle cultural propaganda. The cultural framework provided a cover for the appropriation of the lectures for the purposes of the regime which had to approve the trip. But how could he accept such an invitation "after the speech of January 18", Schramm asked Brandi, seeking counsel, if "afterwards, without my receiving any support, there is talk that I am 'ingratiating myself with



foreigners,' that I am 'celebrating international science?'" (Schramm, P. E. 4 February 1934, to Brandi, Karl [letter] Personal archive of Brandi, 47. Göttingen: NSUB).

There was no satisfactory answer to these questions, although for the moment the interests of the regime in burnishing its reputation abroad and in profiting from the scholarship resulting from international exchange ensured that international co-operation would continue. On an institutional level, international relations between German and foreign historians remained more or less unchanged. Participation in the International Committee and its commissions continued unabated and was as contentious as it had been during the Weimar Republic. On a personal level, however, change was inevitable, and the perception of German historians from abroad shifted accordingly. In the eyes of Scandinavian historians like Friis, for example, their reputation as scholars was increasingly tainted. Still, international historians were torn between a desire for co-operation with their German peers and their disgust for the Nazi regime.

### **The everyday and the out-of-the-ordinary: competition and co-operation before the war**

For those German historians who, notwithstanding their own nationalist views, sought to keep some distance to the Nazi state, international connections could serve to create some breathing room. Karl Brandi, for instance, the chairman of the German Historians' Association, had to concede failure by the mid-1930s; since 1933, he had been unable to organize a national *Historikertag* congress. As the representative of a generation that had come of age under the Kaiser, Brandi had increasingly been shunted aside. The international connections he had previously been so ambivalent about now became a refuge from the politicized atmosphere at home. In this spirit, he wrote to the general secretary of the International Committee that he would rather not see an official position taken on the Spanish Civil War, arguing that "we do not want to get involved in politics, but rather stick together as peers" (Brandi, K. 21 November 1936, to Lheritier, Michel [letter] Personal archive of Brandi, 41. Göttingen: NSUB). This appeal to the apolitical proved chimerical, of course, as international co-operation in the sciences was a highly politicized field in itself and acutely sensitive to political developments.

Brandi had, with some justification, compared the International Committee to the League of Nations. Germany had joined in 1926, and its withdrawal under Hitler marked the start of the League's steady decline. The European nations, Brandi observed, no longer believed in international collaboration and he saw parallel developments in the International Committee: "Our conferences make us look less like an umbrella organization and more like the stock exchange. And with that comes a different aim: nations are traded here [...]" (Brandi, K. 26 May 1936, to Mommsen, Wilhelm

[letter] Personal archive of Brandi, 40. Göttingen: NSUB). Nevertheless, considering the developments in German historiography – the establishment of Nazi institutions and the growing self-confidence of government policies in this realm – the international outlook was comforting, holding as it did the appeal of the out-of-the-ordinary. With the everyday so bleak, international co-operation, however problematic, was a ray of light.

Another International Congress was scheduled in Zurich for the fall of 1938, and here the state of international relations among historians was made manifest. Now, however, German historians would not be under the aegis of a new government still finding its footing after only a few months in office, but would instead be sent explicitly as representatives of the National Socialist state. In addition, German historical science had undergone significant change on a national level with regard to both its leading representatives and institutionally. Whether the positive experiences of the Warsaw Congress could be seamlessly continued was questionable. The Nazi regime was viewed sceptically at the very least, often rejected outright, and the resonance of the Warsaw event within Germany had been less than ideal. Although the preparations were less contentious than they had been before the Warsaw conference, there were concerns on the German side. Albert Brackmann, whom I quoted at the outset, feared attacks on “the new Germany”. As a countermeasure, Brackmann suggested activating the “resources of the *Publikationsstelle*”, meaning the publication office in Dahlem, one of the most important institutions of the so-called *Ostforschung* (Brackmann, A. 26 February 1937, to Brandi, Karl [letter] Personal archive of Brandi, 46. Göttingen: NSUB). These worries were baseless, however, as the Swiss, led by Hans Nabholz, proved sympathetic to German concerns. Brandi had no problems passing himself off to the Swiss organizers as a representative of the regime’s interests in the realm of academia. He presented himself as a trusted colleague, first and foremost, but he was also bound to the Nazi regime by sufficient shared interests. Both sought a national representation, the recognition of German historiography at the expense of the competition from France and Poland. It wasn’t an interest in scholarship these strange bedfellows shared, but in issues of cultural politics. Brandi wanted the German historians and, by extension, the German nation to play a role commensurate with their standing in the field. His disposition, nationally oriented if not downright nationalist, was not terribly bothered by interventions by the state. And so he passed on the German authorities’ demand that several unwelcome applications be quietly withdrawn to Nabholz, who granted the request without further ado. This was a form of co-operation between colleagues that was not premised on outside coercion but rather on the mutual respect of two scholars of history, the one German, the other Swiss.

The impetus for the changes that Brandi requested was the unexpected increase in the influence Germany could command on the international scene; the so-called *Anschluss* of Austria meant the dissolution of the latter’s



independent representation in the International Committee. Austrian historians did not miss an institution that, though dutifully established, had like a sore represented the denial of the unification of “German Austria” with Germany in 1918. Brandi began the process of “integration of the Austrians into our organization” even before the referendum was held to try to give the *Anschluss* an air of legitimacy (Brandi, K. 1 April 1938, to Platzhoff, Walter [letter] Personal archive of Brandi, 48. Göttingen: NSUB). Soon thereafter, he was able to announce the new organizational structure to the president of the International Committee, the Brit Harold Temperley. This historians’ *Anschluss* appeared a matter of course to all involved, so much so, that the necessary formalities of informing the International Committee were at first not adhered to. In the end, Nabholz, as chairman of the Zurich organizational committee, had to inquire, since a meeting of the board had been marked by “considerable uncertainty about” how to treat the Austrian national committee in light of the fact that the country no longer existed (Nabholz, H. 25 May 1938, to Brandi, Karl [letter] Personal archive of Brandi, 40. Göttingen: NSUB). Ultimately, the Austrians did not need to announce that their organization had been dissolved. Instead, Brandi declared that the German organization would represent the Austrian historians in the future.

Ensuring the “after the *Anschluss* [...] self-evident representation of the Austrian historians by the *Reich*-German committee” was one of Brandi’s last acts in office (Brandi, K. 23 June 1938, to Nabholz, Hans [letter] Personal archive of Brandi, 41. Göttingen: NSUB). The “*Führer*” of the “pan-German [*gesamtdeutschen*] delegation” had announced his departure as vice president of the Committee to Temperley more than a year earlier and had not been swayed by the latter’s protestations (“Your services have been invaluable and by none more appreciated than by myself” (Temperley, H. May 1937, to Brandi, Karl [letter] Personal archive of Brandi, 46. Göttingen: NSUB)). No one was better suited to judge what the loss of Brandi would mean than his designated successor (who had officially already assumed the position sometime earlier). During the preparations for the Zurich Congress – which proved difficult both on the national and the international level – Platzhoff repeatedly sought to “rely on the proven skill” of Brandi; since he understood “international relations better”, he “should make the final decision” (Platzhoff, W. 9 May and 13 June 1938, to Brandi, Karl [letter] Personal archive of Brandi, 46/48. Göttingen: NSUB). Brandi’s experience and professional expertise trumped Platzhoff’s cachet as ideologically sound National Socialist historian. On the international stage, different hierarchical relationships could come to bear. However, not least because of a desire to demonstrate ideological reliability, the collaboration between the two – which had always been marked by rivalry – soon turned to confrontation, both in a national and an international context. The difficulty of the negotiations was made manifest in a strangely militaristic rhetoric. As Brandi explained to his colleague Platzhoff, they were there “for

the moment to catch the bullets for all the German historians and their concerns" (Brandi, K. 9 August 1938, to Platzhoff, Walter [letter] Personal archive of Brandi, 46. Göttingen: NSUB). But, after the ministry of science had approved the official roster of participants and Brandi had been designated the head of the delegation, the eighth International Congress of Historical Sciences could begin in Zurich on 28 August 1938, with German participation (Erdmann 1987, pp. 233–245). The Congress, however, could hardly prove a success in light of the obstacles to international exchange of the previous years and the increasingly ideological colouring of the work of especially the Italian, German and Soviet historians, the latter of whom did not attend the conference. Old issues (too many presentations and lack of coordination among the presenters) were compounded by the new, political problems.

All told, the Congress proved a disappointment for the Germans, and this despite the fact that they had presumed a sort of home field advantage. However, while the government authorities had managed to bench internationally renowned historians like Willy Andreas and Gerhard Ritter – as well as Rudolf Stadelmann, considered a promising talent – they had proved unable to find adequate substitutes. Even though they boasted twice as many participants than in Warsaw, German historians gave fewer presentations – half as many as in Oslo, in fact. There was a stronger international presence in Zurich than in Warsaw. At the latter Congress, there had been more participants, but that was due to the strength of the Polish delegations. Thus, the German contribution was – relatively speaking – even smaller (Erdmann 1987, p. 231, 234). A disappointed Willy Andreas, who as mentioned had not been allowed to participate, consoled himself by concluding that "from the perspective of personal pride" but also professionally speaking, his absence was justified. A visit to Nabholz had made it clear to him just how "narrowly defined the *Reich*-German topics" were in comparison with the "intellectual parade [*geistigen Aufmarsch*]" for instance of the Poles. He considered "the narrow approach to German history in the context of this sort of international competition unfortunate" (Andreas, W. 12 September 1938, to Bittner, Ludwig [letter] Personal archive of Bittner, 3–1. Vienna: Österreichisches Staatsarchiv). Andreas had a clear-eyed understanding of the International Congress as a boxing ring. In the fight for pre-eminence in the interpretation of the past, Germany was throwing in the towel, since the Nazi authorities on a national level did not promote the scholarly prestige that was critical in international debates.

Looking on "silently from the gallery" (Heiber 1966, p. 728) was Walter Frank, ostensibly the leading National Socialist historian of Germany. Instead, he waited until he had returned home to make a characteristic, destructive impact. The occasion was the appearance of Gerhard Ritter. The German delegation had not designated Ritter to speak, in spite of, or perhaps because of his growing international reputation since his presentation in Warsaw in 1933. Still, Ritter was allowed to travel to Zurich and there "lay



the groundwork for a confrontation that would mark him, especially internationally, as an opponent of National Socialism” (Cornelißen 2001, p. 253). That he was able to achieve this simply by contributing to a discussion at the Congress is testament to how poorly the *völkisch*-based Nazi historiography was able to abide even a modest divergence to its views, and thus how ill-suited it was to the flexibility required on the international stage where actors were constantly oscillating between competition and co-operation. Ritter by no means provided a response to his Kiel-based colleague Otto Scheel’s *völkisch* interpretation of Martin Luther that was beyond the pale for the Nazi regime. The debate initiated in Zurich, in which Ritter claimed to have first come up with a German nationalist interpretation of Luther, only became virulent in the exaggerated, retrospective view.

While the dispute between Scheel and Ritter hardly warranted mention on its merits, the fact that the German delegation took issue was observed with interest by the international participants in Zurich. The fact that the German historians had remained aloof of their peers was seen – not inaccurately – as evidence of the lack of academic freedom in Germany and confirmed existing suspicions in this regard. Still, German delegations at congresses past had similarly made a show of unity a top priority and it was not just Nazi Germany that sought to present a united front; issues of cultural politics and cultural propaganda were the purview of other nations, as well. In this context, Ritter had diverged from both the professional and political consensus, and the, sometimes tacit, sometimes explicit approval with which his actions were met reflects just how stifling the atmosphere was on a national level and how great the desire was to open up academic debate to controversy.

A pluralistic, accessible, public conference that permitted open and critical debate could not be held in Nazi Germany. Thus, national conferences in the old tradition could no longer be organized. An ostensible *Historikertag* conference hosted by Walter Frank could only serve to underscore the perceived necessity for a *völkisch* approach to historiography. At the same time, Zurich provided the German historians with an academic freedom that had been lost at home for a long time. Unlike in the 1920s, the international setting provided greater academic and political freedom than at home. Significantly, however, this freedom was open to abuse. Thus, Zurich provided a forum in which the strictures on academic freedom in Germany could be publicly denied. Scheel, for one, believed that the discussion had succeeded in “utterly undermining the stupid notion that German science had been enslaved and German scholars could no longer open their mouths” (Scheel, O. 20 September 1938, to Ritter, Gerhard [letter] Personal archive of Brandt, 46. Göttingen: NSUB). One thing remained consistent: In the back and forth between the national and the international perspective, there was always room for ambiguity.

### International relations in times of war

The Zurich Congress had taken place amidst unnerving signs of an increasingly fraught international crisis surrounding the Sudeten German areas of Czechoslovakia. The organizers had even considered cancelling the conference. Even before Nazi Germany negotiated the annexation at the Munich Conference, the International Congress sought to deescalate, promising to hold the next Committee meeting in Prague. The invitation was extended by a Czech and a German historian, Wilhelm Wostry. Efforts to designate a host city for the next Congress did not go as smoothly, however. Rome was under consideration, but the decision to choose fascist Italy as the host had to be postponed.

The international exchange among historians had resembled a thinly veiled “war in peacetime” especially during the 1920s, replete with attacks and counterattacks, territorial acquisition and losses, allies, enemies and secessionists. Now, in the face of an actual war, the Congress sought to send a different message, holding out the possibility of peace. The efforts came to naught; the occupation by German troops in March 1939 put an end to Prague as a venue for the Committee meeting. Luxemburg instead served as host city for the last meeting of the board of the International Committee before the war. As a German member of the board, Holtzmann reported on the meeting, the most significant result of which was the unanimous decision to extend an invitation to Rome to host the next Congress. “Opponents” of this decision had remained “completely mute”, knowing full well that otherwise “the organization and with it all international co-operation in our field [would be] undermined” (Holtzmann, R. [no date], Report on meeting of the board of the CISH in Luxemburg, 21–24 May 1939, Holdings “Verband der Historiker Deutschlands” B 510. Koblenz: Bundesarchiv). The Dane Aage Friis had been especially vocal in his opposition to designating fascist Italy as the host, but he did not even muster the necessary support within his own national committee, and had given up the chairmanship and his position representing Denmark within the International Committee (Erdmann 1987, pp. 248–252). As Friis explained to Brandi, he was opposed to holding the Congress in countries where “certain categories of historical scholars are disadvantaged [*deklassiert*] for political, racial, or other reasons” (Friis, A. 1 July 1939, to Brandi, Karl [letter] Personal archive of Brandi, 40. Göttingen: NSUB). The majority of the national committees, however, as well as the board had a greater fear of Italy’s departure in the case of a snub and a consequent dissolution of the entire organization. The war prevented the Roman Congress from taking place in 1943.

As the German representative in the International Committee, Holtzmann approved a request by the British treasurer of the Committee to offset yearly expenses just days before the start of the Second World War. Notwithstanding altercations here and there, the organization continued to function with



the usual routine (Holtzmann, R. 21 August 1939, to Platzhoff, Walter [letter] Holdings “Verband der Historiker Deutschlands” B 510. Koblenz: Bundesarchiv). This routine would be mightily disturbed, however, as became clear to the two most important German representatives of international co-operation in December 1939 at the latest. Karl Brandi and Robert Holtzmann were shocked to learn the news of the arrest of more than 180 university professors in Krakow, among them historians, and their deportation to the concentration camp Sachsenhausen (August 1997). His Swiss colleague Nabholz approached Holtzmann to request his support in the matter. “The stupidities of 1914”, such as the arrest and deportation of Henri Pirenne, are “pale in comparison” to current events which are consequently being “thoroughly exploited against us” abroad. Brandi, too, was at a loss and recommended making use of diplomatic channels (Holtzmann, R. 8 January 1940, to Brandi, Karl; Brandi, Karl 13 January 1940, to Holtzmann, Robert [letter] Personal archive of Brandi, 1. Göttingen: NSUB). At the same time, as mentioned at the start of this chapter, Albert Brackmann withdrew a contribution for the *Historische Zeitschrift* on the “History of the East” because of the arrest of his Polish colleagues. The relationship between German and Polish historians and their co-operation in the International Committee of Historical Sciences had indeed reached an end with the German occupation of large parts of Europe. The competition between the two was at least suspended. Some, however, not least the general secretary of the Committee, Michel Lheritier, dreamed of a “peace in wartime”, of continued co-operation. Even after the German occupation of Paris, he continued to try to save, with the “help of German authorities the organization he was responsible for”. His efforts – the Committee Bulletin, for instance, continued to be published – led to his dismissal in 1945 as a collaborator (Erdmann 1987, pp. 255–260, quote p. 255; Hausmann 2002, pp. 100–130).

As early as January 1940, Nabholz had issued a circular to the German representatives communicating the wish of the president that, despite the war, co-operation should “not cease, but rather [...] be rejuvenated”. The commissions should continue their work and preparations for the Congress in Rome should go ahead as planned. After the war, Nabholz continued, international co-operation would be as important as ever, making it even more imperative that “not all connections be broken off” (Nabholz, H. 4 January 1940, to Brandi, Karl et al. [letter] Personal archive of Brandi, 40. Göttingen: NSUB). This was a lot to hope for, especially after the German occupation of France. Still, German historians agreed with Nabholz. Brandi pointed out that “at every opportunity our government professes that it values the representation of our scholarship abroad” (Brandi, K. 2 April 1940, to Bittner, Ludwig [letter] Personal archive of Brandi, 40. Göttingen: NSUB). Seeking “co-operation” with colleagues living in countries under German military occupation appeared a little rich, however. At the end of 1940, Brandi expected, “by means of our academic superiority”, to control all the more important activities. He recommended to the ministry of

science, however, that in the lead up to the Congress in Rome, the office of general secretary of the Committee should be “placed in the hands of a representative of a smaller nation dependent on Germany” (Brandi, K. 18 December 1940, to Reichswissenschaftsministerium [letter] Personal archive of Brandi, 51. Göttingen: NSUB; compare also Erdmann 1987, p. 258). The position of power that German historians were in thanks to the war was to be used judiciously – but Brandi had no intention of giving it up.

International relations had *de facto* been suspended, however, and international congresses, at least in their old form, were unthinkable after the start of the war. The co-operation between the working commissions of the International Committee did not end abruptly, but steadily diminished with time – this despite the efforts of the indefatigable Swiss historian Nabholz, who had replaced Brandi as vice president in 1938. The venerable Allgemeine Geschichtsforschende Gesellschaft der Schweiz (Swiss Society of Historical Research), too, continued its efforts to integrate the German colleagues. In May 1943, a formal invitation was extended to Theodor Mayer, one of the most influential national socialist historians, to attend their yearly conference. The Swiss were assiduous in their efforts to extend a hand of co-operation; Mayer had been invited the previous year but had been unable to attend due to bureaucratic hurdles at home. Mayer had no illusions about the circumstances of his invitation. After returning to Germany from an earlier trip to Switzerland, he reported to the authorities that “The Swiss know very well [...] that they can’t emancipate themselves spiritually from the Reich, especially with regard to German scholarship, without doing maximum damage to themselves” (Mayer, Th. 16 December 1942, Report on his visit to Switzerland, November and December 1942, Holdings B 545/1, Munich: Archiv der Monumenta Germaniae Historica). This left no doubt as to who held the cards, who had the actual power and who was collaborating with whom. Bilateral co-operation could not hide this fact. Whether or not an international “relationship” can exist under conditions of absolute power on the one side and utter dependence on the other, there certainly could be no proper “peace in wartime”. Not least Aage Friis, who had been such a strong promoter of international co-operation since the 1920s, wanted to make sure that his German colleagues were under no illusions that this situation could change anytime soon. Every “effort in this direction during the war undoubtedly lead to nothing and can only be damaging” (Friis, A. 8 September 1942, to Brandi, Karl [letter] Personal archive of Brandi, 1. Göttingen: NSUB).

The reintegration of German historians into an international framework, the revival of international co-operation, would be achieved remarkably rapidly after the war, in spite of Friis’ unambiguous declaration. Common interests with regard to the developing conflict between East and West made the integration of German historians – who despite the political division were at least formally represented by a single association until 1958 – desirable. Thus, German historians were – sceptical voices notwithstanding – invited to participate in the first International Congress since Zurich, held in Paris in 1950. Key driver on the German



side was Gerhard Ritter, who had presented at Warsaw and had caused such furore in Zurich as the antagonist of his Nazi colleague. Whether they were competitive, co-operative or collaborative, international relationships forged connections that proved exceedingly durable. Even Aage Friis, who had roundly rejected the participation of representatives of Nazi Germany, wanted to see co-operation restored. Nearly eighty years old, just days before his death, he wrote to Ritter. Friis reminded his colleague of his manifold relationships with German historians, mentioned his participation in the International Committee “from 1926 to 1939” and expressed his wish “for the success of a fortuitous development of German scholarship, which had played such an important role for the all historical science until 1932” (Friis, A. 29 September 1949, to Ritter, Gerhard [letter] Holdings “Verband der Historiker Deutschlands” B 510/2, Bd. 1, 1949. Koblenz: Bundesarchiv. Friis died on 5 October 1949).

It seems that even Friis, who in recent decades had seen his high expectations utterly dashed, continued to believe in the unifying force and purpose of international scholarly relations. Though the rather informal congresses organized before the First World War had given way to a deep crisis in international relations in the 1920s, a rather surprising solution was found: Germany, the boycotted former enemy, became a well-represented, prominent member of the International Committee of Historical Sciences. The Nazi regime was not indifferent to Germany’s standing, but its aims would inevitably collide with interests of international co-operation. Thus, relations were already severely damaged when in September of 1939, six years after the International Congress in Warsaw which had universally been deemed such a great success, German troops occupied the Polish capital. Just ten years later, in the fall of 1949, invitations were again extended to German historians to exchange ideas and debate with their colleagues from Europe and across the world, illustrating both how discussion, competition and co-operation across borders had become integral to modern scholarship and how the success of these relationships is predicated, for better or worse, on circumstances that lie outside the realm of scholarship.

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## 7 The Academy of Sciences of Lisbon between science, international politics, and neutrality, 1932–1945

*Fernando Clara*

The Galician literary journal *La Gaceta Literaria*, published between 1927 and 1932, regularly included a Portuguese supplement edited by the writer Ferreira de Castro and António Ferro, the man who would be appointed director of the Secretariat of National Propaganda by António de Oliveira Salazar in 1933. In its edition of 1 February 1929, there is a brief text that offers a curious and elucidating metaphorical overview of Portugal's position in the world of contemporary international politics. The text is entitled "Europe's corner", its author was João Ameal (a young historian who would become the official historian of Salazar's regime in the years to follow), and it begins with a powerful, almost filmic, scene:

I do not know if you have ever noticed these men who spend their lives at the corners of the streets, looking, with a familiar and at the same time arrogant expression, to the parade of the masses ... These men are like melancholic statues on moving waves. They dominate the crowd and yet they are divorced from it [...]. Portugal is a bit like that solitary man on the corner, on the margin of Europe's turbulence ...

(Ameal 1929, p. 333)

This "out-of-the-world" Portuguese figure that observes at a distance a world in turmoil is interesting enough to deserve closer examination. First of all, because this metaphorical image, when taken in its historical local context, proves to be much more the product of wishful thinking than an accurate mirror of the political situation of the country: the First Portuguese Republic (proclaimed in 1910) had had more than 40 governments in 16 years and was interrupted in 1926 by a coup d'état that established a military dictatorship out of which a university professor of Coimbra, António de Oliveira Salazar, emerged as the great saviour of the nation; and even if Ameal might be specifically referring to the years immediately after the military coup, it must be added that up until 1933, when a new constitution was adopted and Salazar became the uncontested leader of the *Estado Novo*, the country had had no less than nine prime ministers. In other words, from 1919 to 1933, the political turbulence in Portugal was

essentially no different from the one felt in several other European countries (e.g. Aldcroft 2006, pp. 138–143; Reis 2011).

However, one cannot help acknowledging that historical circumstances made this image powerful enough to survive as a propagandistic auto- and hetero-stereotype of the political situation of a country that at least until 1968 (when Salazar was replaced by Caetano as prime minister) saw itself as “proudly alone” on the international scene.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, this fiction of a peaceful and orderly nation “ruled by university professors” (Schwarzenbach 1942, p. 2) was decisively reinforced by the fact that the country remained neutral during the Second World War, thus being spared the horrors of a devastating conflict. However, the Jewish refugees who sought shelter in or fled via Portugal after 1933, the presence of an unusual cosmopolitan community (international press and intelligence services of the warring nations), and the display of both German and British naval power at Lisbon’s harbour did not leave Portugal unaffected.

To be sure, it is rather improbable that after 1932, when Salazar became prime minister, the “solitary man” with an “arrogant expression” at a street corner would have the chance to see any “parade of the masses” in Lisbon. Unlike his Italian and German counterparts, the university professor of Coimbra was admittedly averse to the masses. But the truth is that those “melancholic statues” would also not be able to grasp the changes (and in some cases, the unrest) that Europe’s turbulence was calling forth in closed governmental circles and in some Portuguese institutions.

This chapter discusses the political turbulence – or perhaps better in this case, the subtle political drift – that disturbed the discreet existence of one of these institutions: the Academy of Sciences of Lisbon. Drawing almost exclusively on published sources of the Academy, focussing mainly on the period from 1932 to 1945, and more specifically on its German corresponding members, this essay explores the entangled international and local networks of the institution, and the way they evolved during the period.

Some of the stories that these sources unveil definitely fall under the category of “intellectual treason”, if by that one means engagement with authoritarian and fascist politics. But others do not. Quite the contrary. All in all, they reflect the ambiguous and often uneasy balance of the Portuguese regime in the face of a complex political international environment, but above all they show how politics and science interacted during the period, how different political, religious, social and individual networks managed to interfere with and spread their influence over a scientific institution.

### **The (not so) apolitical Academy of Lisbon**

Like many other European academies, the Lisbon Academy of Sciences was created in the late 18th century in the spirit of the Enlightenment. One century later, however, the institution had become peripheral in a double sense,



scientifically and geographically. It had lost much of the international linkages that it had been able to cultivate during the first decades of its existence, and after the republican foundation of the universities of Lisbon and Oporto (and the re-foundation of the University of Coimbra) in 1911, it lost much of its national scientific relevance as well. At the beginning of the 20th century, membership at the Academy was basically honorific.

The First World War brought important changes, both global and local, to this state of affairs. From a global point of view, the first and perhaps most important of these changes has to do with the fact that several European scholars and academies got an unusual public visibility during the period, mainly because of their reactions to the Manifesto of the Ninety-Three (“An die Kulturwelt! Ein Aufruf”).<sup>2</sup> Intellectuals had thus been pushed to the very foreground of international public opinion and international politics.

Interestingly enough that was not the case of the Lisbon Academy, which kept an ambiguous and perplexing silence about the German Manifesto and about the war. In fact, it was not the Academy of Lisbon but a group of intellectuals and scholars led by Teófilo Braga (a former president of the Republic) and António Cabreira that did manage to publish two very brief letters in Portuguese and French “against the Teutonic vandalisms” (Braga *et al.* 1914a, 1914b) under the aegis of the Academy of Sciences of Portugal, a parallel and competing institution of the Lisbon Academy. It is true that in its sessions of November and December 1914, the Lisbon Academy acknowledged the reception of the “Appel aux nations civilisées!”, the protest of the French universities against the Manifesto, and even of the Portuguese letters just mentioned, which were personally handed out to the assembly by Cabreira himself. But that is all, the minutes of the meetings do not record any comments on any of these documents, nor are there any references to the war (Academia das Ciências de Lisboa 1899–1919, IV, pp. 117–131).

Furthermore, the same baffling silence seems to prevail in the first meeting of the Academy that was held immediately after the German Reich had declared war on Portugal, in March 1916. In fact, in its session of April 1916, there is a brief record of a rather vague clarification request of one of the members (Cândido de Figueiredo) who “had been informed” that “one German member of the Academy had published a leaflet containing injurious expressions against the institution”. The answer he got from another fellow academic present at the meeting (Cristóvão Aires), similar in tone and vagueness, is somehow elucidating: he also “had heard that there must have been some sort of confusion about [the name of] this other scientific society which is not the Academy of Sciences of Lisbon” (Academia das Ciências de Lisboa 1899–1919, IV, p. 43).<sup>3</sup> The language of the minutes is understandably cautious and vague, after all the minutes were supposed to be public and published, and the whole episode could thus be read as nothing more than a regrettable misunderstanding.

It was as if the war – in which the country was now directly involved – or the noise produced by inflamed public discussions about the conflict was outside the scope of the Academy. That science is apolitical and should not engage in politics, seems to have been the guideline followed by the Academy.<sup>4</sup> The same guideline was confirmed in other, much more explicit words, paradoxically pronounced in June 1917 in a session where the leading political actor of the country, the acting President of the Portuguese Republic, Bernardino Machado, was elected member of the Academy: “at the Academy we have never done politics: this room has no windows to the street, and the echoes coming from there break against these thick walls” (*Academia das Ciências de Lisboa 1898–1929*, XI, p. 633).

Significantly, it was only after the end of the war that the conflict was explicitly and directly mentioned in the minutes of the Lisbon Academy. In January 1919, the president proposed “a vote of congratulations” to the signature of the Armistice “which announced the forthcoming celebration of peace and, therefore, of the victory of the allied nations, to whose number we belong”. A special “message of congratulations for the victory” was also sent to the “French Academy and other scientific associations of the allied countries” (*Academia das Ciências de Lisboa 1899–1919*, V, p. 190, 193).

That the country belonged to the victorious “allied nations”, as the minutes of the assembly stress, was indeed of great importance to the Lisbon Academy, for it was called to take part in the newly created International Research Council (from which the Central Powers and the neutrals were excluded), and even though it played a rather modest role, because of its historical double peripheral condition; this allowed the Portuguese institution to rebuild, in part, its linkage to the international scientific community.<sup>5</sup> Under the pressure of scientific internationalism, the Academy became less isolated, which had an impact on its activities and life during the interwar period and well beyond that.

Another issue that should be taken into account in order to better understand the evolution of the international networks of the Academy from around 1932 to 1945 is the fact that the institution, like the country, was clearly under the French sphere of influence. As the specific reference to the French Academy in the above-quoted minutes suggests, France worked as a model and as the centre of Portuguese international cultural and scientific networks. Of course, one would not expect to see German academic institutions mentioned in such a context, after all, the war was just over and the German Reich was the enemy. But on the other hand, the lack of specific references to similar British institutions cannot go unnoticed. This might be explained by some sort of generational historical memory that tended to look with a certain distance – if not with mistrust – at Britain, because of the international humiliation that Portugal had been subjected to by the British Ultimatum of 1890, when Portuguese troops were forced to withdraw from some of its colonial territories in Africa (on this episode, see Nowell 1982 or Coelho 1990).



Finally, there is one more important aspect to be mentioned that determines many of the changes that the Academy underwent in the following decades: the tension arising simultaneously from the pressure to go public and from the reluctance to deal with political issues and events in an institution devoted to science. This was in other words produced, on the one hand, by the pressure that had been globally pushing the intellectuals to the foreground of public opinion since the beginning of the First World War, and, on the other hand, by the inner pressure to keep the Academy apolitical and to avoid any explicit reference to (national or international) politics in academic contexts (a pressure that is well illustrated by some of the above-quoted passages of the minutes of the assemblies).

### **The academy reborn**

All of these aspects converge in three important initiatives that the Academy planned during 1931 and carried out from 1932 on. First of all, under the suggestion of Moses Bensabat Amzalak (head of the local Jewish community and by then vice-rector of the newly founded Technical University of Lisbon), the Academy created the Instituto de Altos Estudos (Institute for Higher Studies). According to its statutes, the institute's mission was "to disseminate scientific research conducted by academics", and for that purpose it would organise courses and lectures, "free and open to the public" (Academia das Ciências de Lisboa 1932, pp. 9–10). The opening ceremony of the institute took place in Lisbon, in December 1931, and was attended by several high-ranking political figures, among them the minister of public education, Gustavo Cordeiro Ramos, who sat between the president and the vice-president of the Academy, Júlio Dantas and Egas Moniz.

Second, and following a proposal by Júlio Dantas, the Academy established a new prize: the "Academic Palms" (*Palmas Académicas*), echoing the *Ordre des Palmes académiques*, thus confirming the importance of France as a model for Portuguese intelligentsia. But what is specifically interesting about this new prize is that it could be awarded to a limited number of nationals only, while the number of foreign personalities to which the prize could be given was unlimited. The prize was an obvious internationalisation tool that clearly reflected the new international ambitions of the Academy.

And finally, following a proposal by Egas Moniz, in 1932, the Academy published the first number of its academic yearbook (*Anuário Académico*), which listed its members (with private addresses, phone numbers, and from 1940 on photos), and reported about the academic activities of the preceding year.

In sum, the Lisbon Academy tried to catch up with the times. It fought its own isolation and social concealment by opening itself to the public (the Instituto de Altos Estudos and the yearbook), while at the same time making (unlimited) room to welcome and reward international co-operation (the Academic Palms).

Two of the above-mentioned academics played a crucial role in the definition of this new strategy. One of them was Egas Moniz, who became the president of the Academy in 1932. Moniz was a neurologist who had had a remarkable political career as ambassador to Madrid, Minister for Foreign Affairs, and as representative of Portugal at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919. By then he already enjoyed an international scientific reputation with several papers published mainly in German and French journals (e.g. Moniz 1929, 1930; Moniz *et al.* 1931), and later his reputation materialised in the first Portuguese Nobel Prize in 1949 (on Moniz, see, among many others, Almeida Lima 1974; Correia 2010). The other key academic behind this new strategy was Gustavo Cordeiro Ramos. He was by then minister of public education (a position he held from 1928 to 1933), Full professor of German studies (*Germanistik*) at the University of Lisbon and also a member of the Lisbon Academy since 1917 (he had been admitted to the institution in the same session where the President of the republic was elected). The final part of his education as a teacher of German was spent in Germany, where he published a book on the modern trends in German language teaching (Ramos 1908; on Ramos, see Seruya 2003; Clara 2013). Both men had significant, though distinct, international experience, and both of them apparently moved from science to politics and vice versa without major problems. These two characteristics would play a decisive role in the newly reborn Academy of Lisbon.

The first *Anuário Académico*, the issue of 1932, is particularly interesting and helpful for understanding a changing context like this. It offers an overall “frozen” picture of what the Academy was or had been up until then, and this picture provides a useful touchstone to better grasp the changes that the institution underwent in the following years. The list of foreign corresponding members of the Lisbon Academy is elucidating about its institutional international networks and interests at the beginning of the 1930s: Brazil and France came first with 19 corresponding members each, followed by Spain with 15. The number of corresponding members from other countries was significantly lower: the United Kingdom had eight members, Italy four, Switzerland three, and Belgium, Austria and Germany one each. The international priorities and interests of the Academy are clear enough: while France saw its role as the centre of Portuguese intellectual life confirmed, cultural and linguistic proximity seems to be the key to understand the impressive number of Brazilian and Spanish corresponding members (the Brazilian members were not considered “foreign” correspondents though). But that is not all. The countries with smaller numbers of correspondents also provide useful information about other topics and interests that must have been constitutive of the Academy’s international networks. Take for instance the case of the only German foreign corresponding member in the yearbook of 1932, Georg Otto Schurhammer, elected in November 1928: he was a Jesuit who taught the history of the Portuguese missions in Asia at the Gregorian University in Rome, and had published widely on Francis



Xavier and on Portuguese Asia. And that seems to suggest that Religion and Portuguese colonial history also played a not negligible part when it came to academic honorific membership.

The *Anuário Académico* of 1933 reflects the new strategy of the Academy and brings significant changes to this picture. The list of German foreign correspondents has now four new members. Right at the top of this list is Albert Einstein, elected on the session of 17 March 1932 of the Class of Sciences together with the Italian Tullio Levi-Civita, both of them proposed by Mira Fernandes, professor of mathematics at the Technical University of Lisbon (*Academia das Ciências de Lisboa* 1929–1982, IV, pp. 146–148). Einstein was a world renowned scientist, even if controversial in his views and theories, so that the invitation to become a member of the Lisbon Academy can only be seen as an effort to give some international visibility to the Academy itself.<sup>6</sup>

At that same session, there were another three foreign corresponding members elected: the Swiss geologist Ernest Fleury, who lived in Lisbon since 1914 and by then taught at the Technical University of Lisbon, and two other German academics. One of them was Hugo Mastbaum, who had been one of the founders and first secretary of the Portuguese Society of Chemistry (1911). Like many other Reich nationals living in the country during the First World War, he was expelled and his assets confiscated after the Reich's declaration of war on Portugal in March 1916. He sought shelter in neutral Spain, where he worked at the Laboratorio de Investigaciones Físicas, and returned to Portugal in 1923 (on Mastbaum, see Leitão *et al.* 2008; Terán 2014, pp. 220–234; Herold 2017). The third German member elected on 17 March 1932 was Dorotheus Schilling.<sup>7</sup> Like Georg Schurhammer, he was a catholic clergyman (a Franciscan) who also moved to Rome later on and had several publications on the “civilising” role of the Portuguese in Asia, more specifically in Japan.

Finally, the fourth new member on the list of German foreign correspondents, elected on 16 June 1932, was Carl Neuberg, at the time director of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Biochemistry. Like Einstein, Neuberg was an internationally renowned scientist of Jewish descent, who, from 1919 to the time of his election to the Lisbon Academy, several times had been among the nominees for the Nobel Prizes of Chemistry and Physiology or Medicine. In the years to follow, from 1933 to 1935, his name was again in the list of nominees but he was never awarded a Nobel Prize (see details in Björk 2001). His membership at the Academy should therefore be seen as part of the strategy to give the Portuguese institution international visibility. But Neuberg also had personal and professional links to Portugal. One of his students and friends, Kurt Paul Jacobsohn, worked at the Instituto Rocha Cabral in Lisbon since 1929. They both met again in Portugal when Neuberg held two lectures at the Higher Studies Institute in October 1934 and received the Academic Palms (*Academia das Ciências de Lisboa* 1929–1982, VI, p. 252; Neuberg 1935). In 1934, Neuberg was forced to resign from his post at the Kaiser Wilhelm

Institute but he managed to work there until 1936. He stayed in Germany until 1939 and around 1940 he moved to the US where he died in 1956.<sup>8</sup>

The election of these new foreign corresponding members was clearly in line with the strategy defined by the Academy in 1931. Internationalisation and public visibility were the new priorities. Nevertheless, it is also important to note that these new priorities did not impose themselves over the more traditional areas of interest of the Academy. Tradition and innovation appeared to live side by side: the election of a Franciscan specialised in the history of the “civilising mission” of the Portuguese in Asia by the Class of Sciences did not seem to collide with the election of Einstein by the same Class and in the same session. Changes brought by this new strategy would be of a mild reformatory type, rather than revolutionary. And there was also room to reward work done before the First World War and somehow compensate for the losses suffered, as in the case of Mastbaum. But what really deserves to be emphasised here is the fact that, out of the six new corresponding members admitted to the Academy in 1932, four were Germans. No other nationality saw its honorific weight at the Lisbon Academy increase so much in one single year during the period under consideration here.

### **Nazis at the academy**

The *Anuário Académico* of 1934 brings an intriguing change. Einstein simply disappears from the list of German foreign correspondents. His name is now to be found among the “Swiss correspondents”. A footnote explains the change: “Expelled from Germany by the Hitler government, he declared that he was born in Switzerland” (Academia das Ciências de Lisboa 1932–1977, 1934, p. 27).<sup>9</sup> It was obviously not possible to avoid a political reading of this change of nationality or of the new world situation created by the Nazi seizure of power in Germany. The political storm that was beginning to hit Europe was also being felt at the otherwise quiet and discreet – some would say lethargic – Lisbon Academy.

Furthermore, this was the first time that Einstein changed nationality in the yearbook of the Academy, but not the last one. In the issue of 1945, he was back at the top of the list of German correspondents, disappearing again from that list two years later to become the only American foreign corresponding member of the Lisbon Academy. And the case of Einstein was not the only one to reflect the inherent volatility of the concepts of nationality and citizenship during the period.

What cannot be left unnoticed, however, is that Hitler had thus entered the *Anuário Académico* of the Lisbon Academy. True, in a footnote and ironically enough via Einstein, but the fact is that he would stay there too, obviously not in person but through his followers and supporters.

In the yearbook of 1936, there is a new German correspondent listed: Fritz Lejeune. Lejeune was by then director of the Portuguese-Brazilian



Institute of the University of Cologne, where he also taught history of medicine since 1928. He had studied medicine and comparative linguistics at the universities of Greifswald and Bonn, and several of his works dealt with the history of medicine in Spain and in the Ibero-American world. Lejeune had been a member of the NSDAP in the 1920s and rejoined the party in 1932. He was elected to the Lisbon Academy in November 1935 (*Academia das Ciências de Lisboa* 1929–1982, VII, p. 334; on Lejeune's life and career, see Schmierer 2002).

The election of Lejeune unveils an intricate thread of personal and institutional networks that deserve some attention. In May 1935, he and Ivo Dane, general secretary of the Portuguese-Brazilian Institute, had been invited to a session of the Academy where they handed its president, Júlio Dantas, the diploma of honorary membership of the Institute of Higher Studies of the University of Cologne (*Academia das Ciências de Lisboa* 1929–1982, VII, p. 155). Actually, Lejeune and Dane were in Lisbon to sign a covenant with the Junta de Educação Nacional (National Education Board), an institution created in 1929 by Cordeiro Ramos, and headed by Celestino da Costa, an embryologist who had studied in Berlin at the beginning of the century.<sup>10</sup> The agreement was signed before the Portuguese Minister of Public Education, who was by then Eusébio Tamagnini, a professor of anthropology at the University of Coimbra and founder of the Portuguese Society for the Study of Eugenics. Its statutes had just been published in December 1934 in the official journal of the Portuguese government. Needless to say, the time and circumstances were undeniably propitious for such a covenant. Furthermore, Cordeiro Ramos had previously been made honorary senator of the University of Cologne in September 1933 (Ramos 1934b) and the role he played in bringing together all the groups involved, either as a former Minister of Public Education or as a member of the Academy, can hardly be neglected.<sup>11</sup>

On the whole, Lejeune's election to the Lisbon Academy in November 1935 can only be seen as the natural outcome of a process to which several personal and institutional networks contributed: a genuine appreciation of German science connected with an obvious institutional interest in developing bilateral scientific co-operation between the two countries (Celestino da Costa among many others), a certain affinity of thought regarding eugenics (Tamagnini), the public germanophilia of Cordeiro Ramos (e.g. Ramos 1934a, 1939), and finally the fact that Lejeune's scientific work was in line with the traditional areas of interest of the academy (history of the Ibero-American colonial empire).

The *Anuário Académico* of 1937 does not bring noticeable changes to the "balance" of the foreign corresponding members of the Academy but the 1938 edition does. Under the heading "German corresponding members", there is a new name listed: Joachim Friedrich Wohlwill, elected on 20 May 1937. And yet, the minutes of the academic meetings also mention the election of another foreign correspondent on that same session: Prof. Dr. Rudolf Victor Müller-

Hess, director of the Institute for Forensic and Social Medicine of Berlin (*Academia das Ciências de Lisboa* 1929–1982, IX, pp. 219–220). In fact, the minutes of the May 1937 session are unusually expansive when it comes to introducing both candidates. Presiding the assembly, Egas Moniz spared no praise for the “notable works of Prof. Wohlwill” nor for the “privileged position” that Professor Müller-Hess “enjoyed in world Forensic Medicine”. And in the next session of the Class of Sciences, on 3 June 1937, the president gave “the *two new German* correspondents” (*Academia das Ciências de Lisboa* 1929–1982, IX, p. 226, my emphasis), both present at the meeting, a warm welcome. Strangely enough, however, Müller-Hess is not listed under “German correspondents”. His name is instead to be found among the Yugoslavian members of the Academy.<sup>12</sup>

Müller-Hess was in fact born near Belgrade in a German-Swabian family. He studied in Germany (Leipzig and Königsberg), in 1922, he was full professor of medicine at Bonn, and in 1930, he moved to Berlin to become the head of the Institute of Legal Medicine of the University of Berlin. Apparently he never joined the NSDAP – from 1935 on, he and his wife held an Aryan certificate though – but his work on blood groups, paternity or sterilisation must have been far too important for a regime truly obsessed with the idea of race and (biological) origins. He kept his post in Berlin during the Nazi years. Furthermore, Müller-Hess together with his assistant Wiethold (Kiel) was involved as advisor in the making of the Nazi sterilisation laws (Jeske 2008).

His name was proposed to the Lisbon Academy by Dr. Azevedo Neves, who had specialized in anatomy and forensic medicine in Berlin (under Virchow) and was by then Rector of the Technical University of Lisbon after having held a number of government positions. Neves was therefore another scientist in politics, who had previously studied in Germany and who was now interceding for German science (and thereby, to a certain extent, also promoting himself). But as far as Müller-Hess’ process is concerned, there is still a final detail that is worth a brief note.

As mentioned before, at the time of his election to the Academy, Müller-Hess was in fact in Lisbon, and on 3 June 1937, he gave a lecture at the Higher Institute of Economic and Financial Sciences (*Instituto Superior de Ciências Económicas e Financeiras*) at the Technical University of Lisbon. It was admittedly a rather peculiar place to hold a lecture on forensic medicine. However, when one looks at this institute from the point of view of the local scholarly networks, the picture somehow changes. The institute, led by Moses Bensabat Amzalak, had a tradition of hosting events and lectures by renowned foreign scholars, many of them German. In 1935, for example, the official opening ceremony of the newly created German Office of Economic and Financial Documentation took place there and that, among other things, must certainly have contributed to the fact that Amzalak, a prominent member of the Lisbon Academy, Vice-Rector of the Technical University of Lisbon, *and* also head of the Lisbon Jewish community,



was awarded the medal of excellence from the German Red Cross in that same year (Louçã and Paccaud 2009).

On the whole, what the elections – and the events surrounding the elections – of Lejeune and Müller-Hess to the Lisbon Academy show is that, by 1937, political and scientific networks linking Germany and Portugal were already well articulated. Supporters of the German regime in Portugal were to be found everywhere among the local elite, sometimes even among the least expected members of that elite, as is the case of Amzalak.

### **The other side: local networks and refugee scholars**

But there were also other networks operating at the Lisbon Academy. Or perhaps better: some of these well-oiled political and scientific networks linking Germany and Portugal also served diametrically opposite purposes, providing shelter and support for scholars fleeing Nazi Germany. Joachim Friedrich Wohlwill, elected in May 1937, is a case in point.

Wohlwill was a German-Jewish pathologist (*Chefarzt* and Prosector) at the St. Georg Hospital in Hamburg and also a professor of pathology at the Hamburg-Eppendorf University Hospital led by Max Nonne. He held both these positions until the National Socialists came to power. After April 1933, he worked at the Jewish Hospital in Hamburg and began to search for a position outside Germany. In June 1934, he “was called by the Portuguese Government as ‘Prosector’ at the Portuguese Institute for Oncology”, and two years later, he was working at the university hospital Santa Marta in Lisbon. He lectured pathology at the University of Lisbon until the end of 1946, when he and his wife left the country to join their children in the US.<sup>13</sup>

Portuguese sources are unanimous in stressing the important role he played in the history of Portuguese medicine of that period (see Horta 1951; Costa 2003). He was quite active at the Lisbon Academy and it is worth pointing out that while in the US, he still tried to stay in contact with the Academy and several of his Portuguese fellow colleagues.<sup>14</sup>

Egas Moniz must have had a key part in Wohlwill’s introduction to the Lisbon Academy, as he had already had, according to Nonne (1951), in helping the German-Jewish pathologist finding a job in Portugal. The unusual space that the minutes of the session of 17 June 1937, in which Wohlwill made his first communication to the Academy (On the history of anatomical pathology of the nervous system), dedicate to his lecture and to the vivid discussion that followed (Academia das Ciências de Lisboa 1929–1982, IX, pp. 229–230) offers a clear sign of the unanimous support that Wohlwill enjoyed among his Portuguese colleagues (Moniz and Celestino da Costa among others).

From 1937 to 1945, there are no new German correspondents of the Academy and the foreign correspondents list stabilises. The growing tensions in Europe constituted a drawback for the internationalisation strategy of the institution. But that does not mean that nothing changed. When the war began,

the Academy did not react with the usual silence. Sure enough, the name of the aggressor was not mentioned but still the president was able to “express his homage” to its counterpart institution of (catholic) Poland (*Academia das Ciências de Lisboa* 1929–1982, XI, pp. 141–142). And in 1943, when the war tide was clearly beginning to turn, the pro-Allies networks of the Academy became much more publicly visible.<sup>15</sup>

### **Collaborating neutrality**

The yearbooks of 1945 and 1946 show a curious – and for many perhaps unexpected – picture of the Academy’s international networks when compared to the first edition of 1932. Germany started with one corresponding member in 1932 and ended up with seven in 1945 (eight if Müller-Hess is included). This substantial increase in the number of German members cannot be overlooked, much less ignored, above all because by the end of the Second World War, all other countries – with one exception only – had less correspondents at the Lisbon Academy than in 1932. By 1945, Brazil had 18 corresponding members (against 19 in 1932), France had seven (compared to 19 in 1932), Spain had six (15 in 1932) and, finally, the United Kingdom had four corresponding members (and eight in 1932). Italy was the only country that, next to Germany, saw the number of its corresponding members increase, from four in 1932 to seven in 1945.

To be sure, the links that these seven (or eight) German corresponding members had to Germany were rather weak. The two catholic clergymen were living and working in Rome, Einstein, Neuberg and Wohlwill were Jewish German scientists (Wohlwill was living in Lisbon since 1934 and got his Portuguese citizenship in April 1940), Mastbaum had been living and working in Portugal since the late 19th century and returned to Lisbon after the end of the First World War, and finally Müller-Hess was listed as Yugoslavian, despite his integration and collaboration with the Nazi regime.

But still, the numbers are clear enough. Germany and Italy were the only countries that saw their honorific representation at the Lisbon Academy increase from 1932 to 1945. Does this mean that the Academy took an authoritarian turn during the period, a turn that somehow mimed the political affinities of Salazar’s regime? To a certain extent, yes. But on the other hand, the great diversity of (political, religious, scientific) backgrounds of the German corresponding members shows that the political motivations underlying the important pro-German faction of the Academy are not that simple as they might seem.

At the beginning of the 1930s, there appears to have been an overall consensus at the Lisbon Academy about the significance of Germany, especially among the members of the Class of Sciences (all the German members elected during the period were elected to the Class of Sciences; the only German member in the Class of Letters, Schurhammer, had been elected in 1928). This consensus can be traced back to the 19th century (or even to



the late 18th century) and to the fact that many Portuguese academics in these areas had studied in Germany and had kept contact with their German colleagues (e.g. Clara 2013; Ninhos 2014). The election of all the German members to the Lisbon Academy during this period is, thus, first and foremost a product of this pro-German-science consensus. From 1933 on, however, a slightly different pro-German faction emerges. It builds upon the existing consensus – it works as a sort of a parasitic supplement to it – but takes a political turn emphasising the affinities of both authoritarian regimes. The elections of Lejeune and (to a certain point) Müller-Hess are obvious subsidiary products of this pro-German-politics faction.

And then, around 1937, with the tensions in Europe rising and the Spanish Civil War being fought next door, a rumour spreads in international political circles that Germany “was determined to obtain possession of colonies by hook or by crook, and these insinuations have led to widespread unrest. Political suspicion increased considerably, not only in France but in smaller countries such as Belgium and Portugal” (Epp 1937, pp. 4–5). The Portuguese colonial empire was not only a traditional central topic of the Academy but also a very sensitive issue for Salazar’s political regime. Furthermore, the whole situation must have been perceived by the Portuguese government as some sort of *déjà vu* which reminded it of the secret Anglo-German negotiations concerning the Portuguese colonies during the First World War (Langhorne 1973; Vincent-Smith 1974). The German authorities denied the rumour but the truth is that Portugal’s attitude in a world that was preparing for war began to change.

The Academy, for example, appears to have interrupted part of its internationalisation strategy by then (at least as far as the admission of foreign corresponding members goes). One might be inclined to think that silence would take once more the place of international dialogue and that this silence somehow anticipated the future political neutrality of the country during the war. However, these would turn out to be false assumptions. At the Academy, the members of the pro-German politics faction kept quite active. After 1937, the Academic Palms (along with other Portuguese honours and decorations) were still being awarded to Germans (Clara 2014, pp. 144–145) and the institution was still hosting lectures by renowned German scholars. As late as February 1944, the Romanist, former rector of the University of Munich and signer of the Ninety-Three Manifesto, Karl Vossler, held a lecture at the Institute of Higher Studies. Hoyningen-Huene, head of the German Legation in Lisbon, had a prominent place among the audience (Academia das Ciências de Lisboa 1929–1982, XVI, pp. 85–90; Vossler 1944). At the Lisbon Academy, life went on almost as usual.

By the end of the war, the ambiguous neutrality of the country obviously had to be reassessed, reinterpreted and rewritten. In 1945, the Secretariat of National Propaganda (rebaptised the National Secretariat of Information) published a pamphlet in English: *Portugal and the war: Collaborating neutrality*, referring to collaboration with the Allies. Stressing the “Portuguese

contributions towards victory and the benefit of Humanity” (Teixeira 1945, p. 20), the pamphlet reproduced the new official version of the history of Portuguese neutrality during the war, a version that had been retrospectively rewritten and adapted to the new balance of powers of the post-war world. As these pages have shown, however, the history of the Lisbon Academy, like the histories of many other Portuguese elite institutions during the period, tells quite a different story. It is a story clearly marked by an attitude of “benevolent neutrality towards Germany” (Leitz 2003, p. 186) that still needs to be rediscovered, further explored and rewritten.

## Notes

- 1 The words were used by Salazar in a speech before the new executive committee of the National Union in 1965 (Salazar 1967, p. 368) and referred specifically, in that context, to the increasing international isolation of the country caused by the colonial wars in Angola, Guinea, and Mozambique; however, they quickly became a motto of Salazar’s regime.
- 2 See for example the texts compiled by the American *New York Times* as volume I of a series on the “Current history of the European war” (New York Times 1914).
- 3 Figueiredo is apparently referring to Hugo Schuchardt’s leaflet (1915a) where these misunderstandings are not present at all, quite on the contrary; the leaflet is clearly motivated by the need to distinguish both academies, it reproduces (in Portuguese) and translates (into German) the abovementioned letter published by the Academy of Sciences of Portugal in 1914, and has some very critical observations on both the latter institution and Teófilo Braga; the leaflet apparently clarifies and compensates for an indeed caustic newspaper article which Schuchardt had published at the beginning of January 1915 in the *Grazer Tagblatt* (Schuchardt 1915b).
- 4 This kind of guideline had become global (and trivial) within academic settings during the period; see, among many others, Hardtwig (2004) that addresses the case of the Prussian Academy of Sciences, and Friedman (2012) that deals with the case of the Swedish Academy of Sciences.
- 5 See the minute of the session of 3 July 1919 (Academia das Ciências de Lisboa 1899–1919 V, pp. 323–337) where these issues are discussed.
- 6 It is worth noting that the Lisbon National Library held in 1930 a Physics Exhibition that was basically centred around Einstein and his relativity theory (see Biblioteca Nacional 1930); on the reception of this theory in Portugal, see Fitas (2005).
- 7 The date of his election to the Lisbon Academy has a typographical error in the 1933 yearbook (17 March 1927) which was corrected in the following editions; he also published under the name Konrad Schilling.
- 8 On Neuberg’s life and scientific achievements, see Nord (1958), Nachmansohn (1979, pp. 311–327), and more recently Lohff and Conrads (2007); particularly, interesting in this context is the obituary that Kurt P. Jacobsohn published in a Portuguese magazine (Jacobsohn 1958).
- 9 The footnote reproduces *ipsis verbis* a handwritten note in Portuguese that occurs twice in Einstein’s individual file at the Academy’s archive (individual file of Albert Einstein. Lisbon: Archive of the Academy of Sciences of Lisbon).
- 10 On the role played by the National Education Board in the internationalisation of scientific research in Portugal, see Fitas *et al.* (2012) and Ninhos (2016).



- 11 In Lejeune's individual file at the Academy's archive, there is clear evidence that at least part of his correspondence reached the Academy via Cordeiro Ramos; see his letter to the Academy sending the *German–English, English–German Dictionary for Physicians* that Lejeune published after the war, where Cordeiro Ramos feels the need to recall that “professor Lejeune is a dedicated friend of our country. To his efforts, we owe in great part the creation of the Luso-German [sic] Institute of the university of Cologne” (Ramos, G.C. 3 June 1953, to Joaquim Leitão, secretary-general of the Academy of Sciences of Lisbon [letter], individual file of Fritz Lejeune. Lisbon: Archive of the Academy of Sciences of Lisbon).
- 12 The source of this misunderstanding appears to be Müller-Hess himself, as well as the geographical concept of nationality used by the Academy. In the academic admission form he had to fill out, he gave “Semlin (Yugoslavia)” as his “place of birth”. For the Academy, this meant he was Yugoslavian. However, a handwritten note in his individual file at the Academy's archive corrects this with the following words (emphasis in original): “German correspondent (and *not* Yugoslavian)” (individual file of Rudolph Victor Müller-Hess. Lisbon: Archive of the Academy of Sciences of Lisbon). Contrary to what happened in the case of Einstein and oddly enough, this handwritten note was simply ignored, the yearbook was never corrected, and Müller-Hess remained Yugoslavian at least until 1945.
- 13 See his two-page machine-typed English curriculum available at the Archive of the Leo Baeck Institute, London (Immanuel Wohlwill Family Collection, available from: <https://archive.org/details/immanuelwohlwillf007> [Accessed 24 November 2017]); on Wohlwill, see also Zeidman *et al.* (2016), Costa (2003), and Andrae (2003); on the Portuguese exile of the Wohlwills – his sister Gretchen Wohlwill also joined him and his family in Lisbon in 1940, while two other siblings died in Theresienstadt – see Clara (2018).
- 14 See for example the brief note to the secretary of the Academy asserting his desire to “stay in contact with Portuguese science”, complaining about the fact that he has not received any information about the Academy since he moved to the US, and asking to send the academic publications to his American address (Wohlwill, J.F. October 1948, to António Pereira Forjaz [letter], individual file of Friedrich Wohlwill. Lisbon: Archive of the Academy of Sciences of Lisbon).
- 15 See for example the essay on “Scientific relations between Portugal and Great Britain” by Herculano Amorim Ferreira (1943), that gets a very positive review in the pages of the British magazine *Nature* in that same year (Thomson 1943).

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## 8 Sympathy for the devil? American support for German sciences after 1933

*Helke Rausch*

German–American intellectual and academic ties across the Atlantic flourished intensely since the end of the 19th century. The outbreak of the First World War had temporarily suspended contacts as a consequence of the new nationalist orthodoxy of the German “Mandarins” and angry reactions from American intellectuals (Adam and Lerg 2015). When transatlantic intellectual and more especially scientific contacts were gradually resumed from the mid-1920s onwards, the US-American Rockefeller Foundation (RF), endowed in 1913, played a key role in actively promoting such relations as part and parcel of a broader strategy of scientific philanthropy in Europe, which was deeply embedded in American corporate capitalism (Rausch and Krige 2012): Foundation trustees and officers were a broad variety of postwar progressives, some of them Gilded Age social reformers, others well-established business leaders, academics and managerial circles, all working to administer large-scale grant making from the Rockefeller fortune. They largely concurred in the vision that research and scientific expertise of all sorts was instrumental in developing practical solutions to a plethora of pressing social problems and conflicts concomitant with the basal processes of early 20th-century American industrialization, urbanization and immigration (Fink 2015). Thus, when funding knowledge production particularly in the US and increasingly on a more global and specifically European scale, the philanthropists’ mind was set on a vigorous creed of social engineering: philanthropists were anxious to have scientists generate – and ideally broker to responsible politicians – a multidisciplinary knowledge of the social that would allow to rationalize, manage and control a complex modernity (Alchon 1985; Jordan 1994; Etzemüller 2009).

For most of the 1920s, Rockefeller philanthropy had been about safeguarding that postwar societies would comply with the requirements of what counted as modernity, and about guaranteeing a socially stable and economically productive order (Rausch 2015). During the 1930s, the Rockefeller ambition largely prevailed. But the political and economic situation sharpened with the onset of the Great Depression and the take-off of the “Decades of Extremes” when the European postwar order disintegrated even further, shaky democracies collapsed and economies struggled to

function (Raphael 2011, 2012; Patel and Reichardt 2016). More particularly in Germany, Hitler's seizure to power altered conditions for American scientific philanthropy. An overwhelming majority of Nazi-oriented scientists across the disciplinary spectrum formed a mutually profitable alliance with Nazi politics whose representatives aimed at realizing their radical societal order visions of a mono-racial *Volksgemeinschaft* in an ever expanding totalitarian Germany (Ash 2010a; Flachowsky *et al.* 2016; Hachtmann 2017; Raphael 1996). Philanthropists could and would not keep complete distance. The RF was eager to remain present in the midst of the totalitarian take-over. In some cases, American sponsoring of German research slowly faded out only towards the end of the 1930s.

The RF's financial support of clearly ideologically biased German research would cause precarious, if only temporary transatlantic alliances in the immediate vicinity of totalitarian politics. To probe more deeply into their historical causes and relevance, this chapter first identifies central symptoms of such dubious US sympathies for the Nazi devil with a focus on RF contacts with the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Anthropology, Human Genetics, and Eugenics in Berlin (KWI-A) from 1932 to 1935/37. Second, it rounds off findings by tracing some of the most pressing, often experimental motives and tactics of Rockefeller personnel when dealing with German scientists at other German institutes in the 1930s. The third section modifies the "sympathy for the devil"-assumption by hinting at somewhat different modes of coinstantaneous transatlantic funding during the 1930s in the case of Rockefeller's transatlantic help for refugee scholars and in cases of simultaneous RF engagements for American knowledge production that ran counter to concepts of Nazi science. Briefly synchronizing the at times contradictory and often deliberately vague philanthropic aims of the RF, the chapter ultimately holds that when adhering to German research after 1933, US Philanthropists primarily pursued their highly technocratic interest in the construction and practice of a totalitarian blend of modernization knowledge which was intensely discussed in American social engineering circles at the time.

### **Snapshots on money flows: emblematic instances of Rockefeller funding for German science after 1933**

A highly symptomatic case of Rockefeller scientific philanthropy in post-1933 Germany was RF support for the KWI-A. Founded in 1927, this was a hypertrophic creation. Its founders had tried to combine broadly defined fields of science, to wit a wide range of anthropological approaches from a psychological to a more cultural sort, human heredity as a crossing of genetics and evolutionary biology and finally eugenics, which was to cover a transdisciplinary programme from bio-medical to psychiatric, demographic and economic expertise. Taken together, the institute was hoped to establish some sort of a new "science of man" (Weingart *et al.* 1988; Schmuhl 2005;



Weiss 2010). This broad conceptual approach, widely acclaimed across the board of Weimar political parties, came early on with an explicit claim of KWI-A representatives to advise the state government of Prussia in urgent matters of welfare and health policies. Thus, the social engineering mission was constitutive in the Institute's programmatic conception from its very beginning. Institute members propagandized the so-called differential care concepts based on eugenic assessments of who was deemed "fit" enough to qualify for benefits. The eugenic expertise of KWI-A representatives was said to rationalize and control the problem of welfare expenditures by excluding the so-called defectives and degenerate on such grounds as unemployment, poverty, criminality or disease (Schmuhl 2005, p. 122, 127). In the wake of the Great Depression and exceedingly rising unemployment rates in Germany up to one-third of the workforce, the institute's members had additionally fuelled an already fierce public political debate on social policy, lobbying for at least voluntary eugenic-related sterilization laws hitherto illegal in the Weimar state. At the time of funding from 1932, the KWI-A had already firmly integrated itself into the international Eugenics Movement of the 1920s and 30s. The clear orientation of its most renowned department directors Eugen Fischer and Fritz Lenz towards racial hygiene (*Rassenhygiene*) as a specifically German variant of eugenics caused the institute's research and publications to be well received from the quarters of the International Federation of Eugenics Organizations including, more specifically, from American Eugenicists (Weiss 2010, pp. 48–52).

Rockefeller officers remained rather discreet about what exactly and with what expectations in mind they decided to fund the KWI-A in 1932. Their rare statements suggest that they firmly approved the founding spirit and diagnosis of the institute's political agenda. When Selskar M. Gunn from the RF's European Office in Paris wrote to the RF's president Max Mason in January 1931, he raised the very issues that made the RF worry about the German situation. Conspicuously enough, Alan Gregg, the RF director of the Medical Sciences Division, criticized that the German state seemed to suffer from an all too generous politics of social improvement and reform and was about to overstretch its financial capacities of no avail (Selskar M. Gunn to Max Mason, 19 January 1931, Rockefeller Archive Center [RAC, New York, Tarrytown] Rockefeller Foundation Archives [RFA] RG 1.1/717/7). Gregg's account almost replicated the very diagnosis that lay at the heart of the KWI-A's founding charter.

Between 1932 and 1935, the RF provided funding for a KWI-A-project using research on twins to investigate hereditary diseases (RF Annual Report [AR] 1932, New York 1932, 215; RF AR 1933, New York 1933, 364; RF AR 1934, New York 1934, 300). The money mainly allowed funding an assistantship of the anthropologist and physician Wolfgang Lehmann who had heretofore specialized in blood group research. Serology was a central part of the KWI-A's social engineering expertise as institute members offered their expert advice to the Weimar courts for handling paternity cases

(Weiss 2010, p. 85, 102, 112). Thus, RF money went into what had already been established as flagship genetic research since the institute's inception. Now twin studies, based on at times dubious tests and large-scale non-therapeutic data collections from thousands of experimentees, were ultimately aimed at demonstrating that human traits, insinuating the so-called mental and other deficiencies, were genetically predetermined (Roelcke 2013). At the same time, Rockefeller funding for twin research came with a predilection for a research mode that was, with all its hereditary reductionism, not a German particularity but quite established in contemporary American research as well (Newman *et al.* 1937).

In a way then, Rockefeller money, as it often happened in post-1933 funding endeavours, seemed to have gone to *prima facie* more or less unsuspecting minor research projects. Yet, the notion of unspectacular funding holds true only if measured by contemporary standards of racial eugenics. As a matter of fact, the KWI-A actively cooperated with Nazi racists by legally and politically advising Nazi Policy. Thus, RF money would flow to an institution which exemplified how the science-led social engineering vision of the Weimar years was substantially radicalized after 1933: Once the democratic caveat against sterilization, still valid at the time when the RF decided funding in 1932 under Weimar conditions, became void with the breakdown of democracy in 1933, the KWI-A of 1933, now a RF grantee, played a substantial role in preparing an influential preliminary draft for the “Law for the Prevention of Genetically Diseased Offspring” (*Gesetz zur Verhütung erbkranken Nachwuchses*) ratified in 1933/34. This law basically legalized mandatory sterilization of the so-called hereditarily unfit. Moreover, KWI-A members started issuing innumerable eugenic expert testimonials for the Hereditary Health Courts (*Erbgesundheitsgerichte*) who as part of a net of almost 200 similar courts throughout the country delivered these “unfit” to the sterilization law under the highly unscientific pretension of their being genetically diseased and thus debilitating the gene stock of what was envisioned as the superior Nordic or “Aryan Race” of the German “Volk” (Schmuhl 2009).

On closer historical inspection, the Rockefeller engagement with the KWI-A obviously needs a nuanced validation that does not prematurely identify the American philanthropist with a somehow devilish role. On the one hand, an important rationale for RF funding in the first place in 1932 was that philanthropists were enthusiastic about a German social engineering rhetoric and practice that had not only gained currency across most quarters of Weimar politics until 1932, but was also in many ways compatible with the preferences of the Eugenic International and major parts of American eugenics of the mid-1930s. Moreover, chronologies matter: The RF funding of the KWI-A stopped in 1937/8. Thus, only after the RF had left the scene, the KWI-A became, together with the equally Rockefeller-funded German Research Center for Psychiatry, deeply involved into Nazi sterilization and so-called Euthanasia campaigns that allowed inhuman



medical experimentation and mass murder of persons deemed “unworthy” (Schmuhl 2003, pp. 10–16, 19). The excesses of Nazi racial policy unfolded only after the philanthropists had broken up, if without recalling their grants. On the other hand, the KWI-A was involved in various Nazi racial policy programmes early on. Its initiating role in the sterilization campaign alone could hardly be denied. This made the institute a close coalitionist of a regime which became – if supported neither solely by the KWI-A nor by Rockefeller money alone, to be sure – increasingly murderous. The sterilization law of 1933 caused some 400,000 sterilization victims until 1945, killing up to 6,600 of them (Schmuhl 2005, pp. 280–281). And twin research became a murderous playground for camp physician Josef Mengele’s so-called twin camps in Auschwitz (Massin 2003). Yet again, such excesses occurred after the RF had left the KWI-A funding stage.

While the RF did certainly not comprehensively distribute research funds in post-1933 Germany, the case of RF funding for the KWI-A was by no means isolated. From the about thirty Kaiser Wilhelm Institutes (KWIs) which had been founded by the early 1930s, the RF supported mainly the German Research Center for Psychiatry in Munich (Engstrom *et al.* 2016), plus the four Berlin KWIs for Brain Research, Cell Physiology, Physics (Macrakis 1986, 1989), and Foreign and International Private Law. In addition, they provided numerous KWI scientists with fellowships and funded projects at a variety of other KWIs with smaller “grants in aid” (Sachse 2009, pp. 103, 107). Constellations were specific in each and every case. By way of example, the KWI for Brain Research, led by the soon-to-be expellees (1937) Oskar and Cécile Vogt, was not all too closely connected to the regime when the RF sponsored a new institute building in Berlin-Buch and generously supported interdisciplinary research at the intersection of genetics, neuropathology and clinical psychology (Weindling 1988; Schmuhl 2000; Hagner 2003). But the RF also supported German research in the biological sciences at the KWI for Biology and the KWI for Biochemistry under Adolf Butenandt. In all these cases, the RF intermingled with the so-called pure science which was, against what its German practitioners proclaimed at the time, anything but far removed from ideological and immediate political concerns of the Nazi regime. Even if Butenandt, who received RF stipends in the 1930s and was awarded a research trip to American institutes for hormone research, would always publicly claim that basic research at his institute was autonomous, he would not waver to make relevant findings available to politics and the military once they were interested in specific substances to optimize bodily fitness of the military (Rheinberger 2004, p. 170; Renn *et al.* 2015, pp. 50–52). American philanthropy at that stage meant that the RF dealt with researchers who were most solidly grounded in the National Socialist fabric of racial science, not primarily as result of political pressure but as self-mobilized agents of research (Heim *et al.* 2009; Grüttner *et al.* 2010; Ash 2010b; Walker *et al.* 2013; Wagner 2014).

### **Philanthropic sympathies with German science: the grey area of aspirations and tactics**

The RF's involvement in the intricate constellations was not a random choice. It rather resulted from a mixture of strategic American motivations, interests and considerations that added up to some sort of affinity with German research. A more systematic attempt to scrutinize Rockefeller engagements in post-1933 Germany leads to a series of at least three sorts of strikingly symptomatic attitudes of philanthropists when entering the German stage around or after 1933.

First, funding for the KWIs was a matter of selective American affinities. Not only was the Kaiser Wilhelm Society one of Germany's most outstanding scientific institutes (called Max-Planck-Gesellschaft after 1945). Funded in 1911 by private industry with additional support from the German state, it was also modelled after the renowned Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research of 1901. Established outside regular universities, the institutes recruited well-established and aspiring younger scholars who, released from regular teaching, could focus on particular research projects (Renn *et al.* 2015). As the KWIs quickly gained international reputation, attracting and producing Nobel laureates, RF officers were eager not to cut back funding or even leave the German scene. To justify their decision, many RF observers suggested that funding German research after 1933 was a challenge they could manage. At the KWI for Brain Research, RF officers insisted on protecting two exclusively RF-funded Jewish-born RF grantees more specifically. In a similar vein, RF president Max Mason stipulated in 1933 that Jewish RF grantees would be allowed to draw from these resources until funding ended (Macrakis 1986, pp. 359–360). As RF Trustees raised concern that Rockefeller money should not flow to research institutes close to the Nazi government, it was agreed that while halting institutional funding, RF support would have to be reserved to minor individual research projects (Tracy B. Kittredge, Research Aid Grants in Germany, Memo to John Van Sickle, 3 January 1934, RAC RFA RG 1.1/717/7/36: "Under present circumstances, the Trustees are not prepared to approve new grants to German institutions directly connected with the Government. There is a feeling that such grants would be interpreted as at least a tacit endorsement of Nazi policies."). In 1934, Mason asked foundation officers to find ways to ensure that RF money would be invested solely for projects of sufficiently established researchers far from political or military endeavours of the Nazi regime. Moreover, grants would have to be denied overly political candidates (Wilbur E. Tisdale, Paris Office, to Warren Weaver, 3 March 1937, RAC RFA RG 1.1/717/7/36). Dealing with the Nazi government was considered a matter of sensible control and almost surgical philanthropic intervention.

Second, the RF was sometimes "tempted" by their German contacts. They deceived the RF in thinking that totalitarianism would not obstruct their research which they would conduct rather unaffected from National



Socialist thought. Such statements belied the fact that in post-1933 Germany, neither opposition nor neutrality was a real option unless research was forborne altogether. A wealth of contemporary votes of German scientists at RF-funded institutes would illustrate that point. In the case of the KWI for Physics for instance, its president since 1930 and Nobel laureate Max Planck assured RF representatives that academic freedom would be definitively upheld under the Nazi government (Macrakis 1986, pp. 361–362, 365). Thus, Planck hoped to prove to his American interlocutors that things were on the brink of success and could be carried through with a binding commitment of the RF that would solve the German logjam. At the same time, Planck closely communicated with Reichsminister Joseph Goebbels and lower ranks of the Nazi establishment to assert the scientific potential of the future KWI in nuclear physics much as in more common fields of modern knowledge that deserved both American and German financial support (Steinhauser *et al.* 2011, p. 138). When Planck finally succeeded in 1936 to attract government funding for research from the Nazi regime officials as a precondition for RF investment in a future KWI building, foundation representatives felt obliged not to withhold a financial commitment they had held out for quite some years. The fact that Dutch-born physicist Peter Debye took over the Institute's directorate might have inspired the philanthropic decision. The pattern recurred when Debye would write to the RF in October 1939 (that is, after Hitler had triggered the Second World War) that the KWI for Physics would now become exposed to the Nazi regime's grip on research after having succeeded to stick to "purely scientific work" up until then (Macrakis 1986, p. 373; Walker 2009). Rockefeller officials picked up on that: Early in March 1937, the important informant and RF assistant at the European office, Wilbur E. Tisdale, reported to the Director of the National Sciences Division, Warren Weaver, that while the RF had to operate circumspectly on German terrain, especially "pure research" of the highest "scientific merit" could still be produced, even amidst Nazi preponderance (Wilbur E. Tisdale at the Paris Office to Warren Weaver, 3 March 1937, RAC RFA RG 1.1 Series 717 Box 7 Folder 36).

Yet, third, this is not the whole picture. Because neither was the RF running short of informants that could help to sound out the situation in Nazi Germany. Nor was the RF short of contacts who explicitly warned against American commitments under the auspices of the Nazi regime. As a guest researcher at the KWI for Brain Research, the social geneticist Herman J. Muller for instance drew the RF's attention to the intricacies and fallacies of still lending support to German research in 1933. He wanted to see the RF being solid against anti-Jewish oppression at least when it came to the institute's own Jewish fellows (Weiss 2010, pp. 271–272). The RF knew all too well about the purge of the German Civil Service in 1933 with the "Law for the Restoration of a Professional Civil Service" passed in April 1933, which banned persons of Jewish descent according to the racist anti-Semitic ideology of the Nazi. The RF also heard of the passage of the

Nuremberg Race Laws in 1935 of course. Officers could know that KWG employees and other scientists were dismissed and it had ample evidence that amongst the dismissed was a considerable number of former RF scholarship-holders. The RF knew, amongst many other cases, of the campaign by Nazi activists against the aforementioned, politically unpopular Oskar and Cécile Vogt and their eventual expulsion from the KWI for Brain Research that the RF had set up for them, and it knew of course about the expulsion of Fritz Haber, with whom the Foundation had worked closely and who would rather resign his position as director than dismiss his Jewish coworkers as the Nazi laws required, resulting in the takeover of his KWI for Physical Chemistry by third-rate, party-loyal scientists (Sachse 2009, pp. 107–108). The RF officers' attitude towards Jewish scientists in Nazi Germany remained odd until the late 1930s. It did, for instance, not speak to a resolutely critical distance towards National Socialism, when the Director of the RF's Medical Sciences Division Alan Gregg explained that he could not help Felix Plaut, one of the former directors of the Munich Institute for Psychiatry (at the Department of Serology) who, a Jew himself, tried to escape the German scene (Hansen and King 2013, p. 153).

### **Reverse logics: philanthropic antipathies towards “the devil”**

While there were clear signs of sympathies with the Nazi devil, the RF occasionally chose funding constellations that somewhat counterbalanced their delicate funding bias in Nazi Germany. Such parallel philanthropic endeavours may to some extent testify to a simultaneous will of Rockefeller officers to encourage research transcending the ideological limits of National Socialism. Of these philanthropic inconsistencies, two should at least briefly attract particular attention: first, the case of RF funding for American anthropology and second the issue of refugee scholar aid in the 1930s.

The philanthropic record of funding American eugenics, or eugenically informed social sciences and more explicitly anthropology (as part of the disciplines funded at the KWI-A), was highly incongruent and not of an ideological piece. Rockefeller investments remained double edged. Funding went occasionally to racially inspired, biologicistic physical anthropology during the 1920s and 30s. Madison Grant and physical anthropologist Ernest Hooton from Harvard University were amongst the RF grantees who, as strong nativists, opposed any attempts at liberalizing US immigration policies. These were said to provoke an undesirable mixture of races that could lead to biological degeneration of the culturally dominant “Anglosaxon race” (Baynton 2016).

At the same time, the RF's attitude was more sophisticated. While funding more radical positions, it also supported the very antipode of racist science, Franz Boas and the “Boasians”. Of German Jewish descent, Franz Boas had established himself as the founder of Cultural Anthropology at New York's Columbia University since the mid-1920s. A propagator of



cultural relativism, Boas heavily criticized the biological terminology of (German) racist science and preconceived notions of a dominant, intelligent “Aryan” as opposed to allegedly primitive races. Human differences were not taken as a sign of essentially inferior qualities and deficient hereditary mentalities but instead ascribed to different environmental imprinting. While the National Socialists burned his writings in 1933, Boas and his cultural anthropology would become a frequent grantee of the RF and other American philanthropies such as, most notably, the Carnegie Corporation/Institution (Boas 1932, 1936, 1939; Anderson 2012).

Thus, around the early 1930s, the RF funded racist and decidedly pluralist knowledge production too. Devoid of clear programmatic statements from RF officers about such obvious inconsistencies, two major conclusions suggest themselves: First, the RF’s parallel option for relativist *and* racist anthropology (with, of course, an increasing bias from more relativist to more racist positions) right around 1930 points to a sort of pressing, meandering philanthropic search for workable concepts of scientifically oriented politics in the wake of the Depression. To respond to this challenge, the Foundation resorted to decisionism: they funded opposing concepts as if deliberate pluralism could potentially spur competition and help enforce the better of the two opposing modes to analyse and control the inner fabric of the crisis-ridden, socially, economically, ethnically and regionally fractured American society. If Boas cultural relativism finally succeeded in the US, RF funding could certainly only be a minor part in that story: Boasian relativism prevailed because extensive, overt racism was deemed to be politically untenable at the end of the Second World War and in the early Cold War period, when American postwar administrations took great care to contrast strongly with totalitarianism.

Contextualising the RF strategy in Germany against this backdrop suggests several things: When supporting the KWI-A during the 1930s, the RF acted quite in line with the major consensus amongst mainline American eugenicists at the time. American eugenics promoting political control over human reproduction, guarding the “fittest” against the functionally deficient “weak”, had been an increasingly vibrant movement in the US already since around the 1880s. It became extremely vital amongst fierce discussions on immigration restriction, and mandatory sterilization of so-called unfit immigrants during the 1920s especially in the American West (Kline 2002; Black 2003; Stern 2005; Turda 2010; Cohen 2016; Lavery 2016; Leonard 2016). Sterilization politics were well established in America by 1933 when several thousand mandatory sterilizations were legally performed especially in California (Weiss 2010, p. 265). Even American reform eugenicists, much as main- or hardline eugenicists, occasionally fabulated about the possible merits of eugenics for securing democracy and could, even in 1940, not brace themselves up for an outright condemnation of exterminatory Nazi eugenics (Weiss 2010, p. 274).

In the light of such US discourses, RF officers were inclined to see eugenic research as an urgent project of modernization. Eugenicists seemed to probe how modern societies could be rationally managed and their

make-up controlled right through to its so-called desirable parts. The regenerative gospel resonated strongly with the RF and was acknowledged as a particular instance of intensified social engineering and biological improvement. Rockefeller money to the KWI-A came not so much as support for a specific strategy of negative eugenics, of marginalizing those deemed “unfit” and racially inferior. Eugenics, in the RF’s view rather seemed attractive for its almost emblematic modernist vision of human optimization of individuals and whole societies, with larger impacts on social and political realities. Thus, eugenics stood for the potential of biomedical and biopolitical intervention and engineering in a time when decay and degeneration seemed to threaten the future of modern societies (Turda 2010).

At the same time, such American sympathies both inside and outside the philanthropic panoply were shown in the early 1930s, at a time when it was unforeseeable that the German sterilization furor, much as it was illiberal and inhumane, would even peak in the National Socialists’ eliminatory campaign against the Jews. Moreover, there was of course no American parallel to the “euthanasia” programme and the inhuman medical crimes committed in Auschwitz and other concentration camps. Therefore, funding eugenics and eugenically informed anthropology did not put the RF in one boat with National Socialism. In short, US eugenics research and the role of the RF when funding it in the US were ultimately still embedded in democratic structures, albeit US democracy was seriously hampered by massive ethnic inequalities. Still, this was an emblematic gesture: philanthropic enthusiasm was ethically blind, and deliberately so. It ignored the stigmatizing and aggressive effect of eugenically informed politics on those targeted as “unfit” and, instead of defending their equal rights as humans, condoned the assaults on discredited ethnicities and classes.

Finally, the RF followed somewhat alternative funding patterns during the 1930s in a second respect when lending support to German scientists who had become victims of the regime change of 1933. The Special Research Aid Fund for Deposed Scholars from 1933 to 1939 and the Emergency Program for European Scholars since 1940 were amongst the most extensive aid programmes ever launched for German-speaking scientists in flight from National Socialist discrimination and violence. Some 1.4 million USD were invested in over 300 scholars to allow them settlement and working conditions unmolested from totalitarian impertinences, mostly in the US (Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced Foreign Scholars and *Notgemeinschaft Deutscher Wissenschaftler im Ausland. List of Displaced German Scholars*. London: EC and NWA, 1936). While the RF effectively operated on its own account as much as in close agreement with other Anglo-American philanthropies and aid networks, most notably the Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced Foreign Scholars, philanthropic rescue followed a clear set of selection rules. These were dictated by intellectual rigour, academic excellence and the philanthropic hunt for problem-solving expertise required in the crisis-ridden United States of the 1930s.



Suffering from the regime's oppression would not sufficiently entitle scholars to find Rockefeller support. An indicator of how criteria of professional expertise other than personal plight triggered philanthropic aid, junior scholars were occasionally preferred to more established academics as they were expected to restart and integrate more flexibly abroad and enrich US scholarship for the longer term (Krohn 1993; Gemelli 2000; Kettler 2011, pp. 74–81). The philanthropic view (Thomas B. Appleget, Refugee Scholars, 11 July 1940, RAC RFA RG 1.1/200/46/530 and Joseph H. Willits, 3 June 1940, RAC RFA RG 1.1/200/46/530) often dismissed the fact that émigré scholars, with all due gratitude for the emergency relief, could well find themselves uprooted and forced to revise their career paths from scratch.

## **Conclusion**

Since its very inception and over both its national activities in the US and its swiftly expanded global and European engagements, the RF was driven by a distinct social engineering spirit. Amidst the convulsions of the World Economic crisis both in the US and more globally, American Philanthropists felt challenged on the issue of how science should reflect such disorder and insecurities and how an ambitious philanthropy would take unerring funding decisions. Yet, the philanthropic diagnosis and task was not entirely new. Instead, Rockefeller philanthropy from its very beginnings around the turn of the 20th century considered itself well-g geared at inducing an appropriate and usable academic knowledge and expertise.

Obsessed with issues of governmentally regulating the crisis, New Deal elites including philanthropists had their mind set on Europe both as a bastion of gradually different models of state intervention, modern welfare and social protection and an arena of competing sociopolitical orders. While it seemed clear that the America of 1933 would not embrace parallel European models to cope with the crisis of 1929 and after, interventionist politics were bound to happen in the US as well. When New Dealers discussed how social policy would inescapably have to be framed in the US, they were both alerted and fascinated by what they discovered on the German scene after 1933 when authoritarianism and antiliberalism opened up excessively new ways of science-based social engineering interventions (Vaudagna 2003).

RF president and renowned social engineer Raymond Fosdick started proclaiming around 1937 that Nazi ideology seriously frustrated funding plans in favour of “impartial” science. Still, Fosdick insisted that funding science in totalitarian regimes was not equitable with ideological affinities of the RF with totalitarian thought of any kind (Macrakis 1986, p. 375). Such statements made the RF retreat from funding in Nazi Germany more a reluctant concession to the growingly critical US public and in the context of deteriorating foreign relations with Nazi Germany. Opting out of funding in Germany was hardly a sign of internal strategic revisions. Thus, from the RF's point of view, philanthropists did not betray their proper values. Within the confines of their experimental

social engineering vision, support for radical knowledge production seemed to respond to the crisis of the moment. Their sympathy with the devil was an inseparable part of the social engineering vision of high modernity.

This is how the RF became unavoidably part of the intricate Nazi science–politics nexus where science and politics mutually provided resources, prestige and legitimacy for each other (Flachowsky *et al.* 2016). Funding German since in and beyond 1933 would not, as contemporary and current conspiracy theory would simplistically have it, transform the RF into a dominant co-initiator of radical racial Nazism. From a more hard-headed historical perspective, however, the RF inevitably entered an increasingly delicate power–science constellation under the new regime: Rockefeller representatives sensed selective affinities with the social engineering enthusiasm of German researchers. Out of this impulse, philanthropists cherished the illusion that controlled selective funding of a-political excellence was possible, instrumentalizing scientific philanthropy as a sort of surgical intervention into the dense science–policy nexus of Nazi Germany. Even if the RF worked with a net of informants about the German situation, they were occasionally tempted to adopt the views of their prospective German grantees, assuming that eligible researchers could still guarantee a-political knowledge production far away from intrusive Nazi politics. Rockefeller officers would at times listen to such views with willful naiveté. Besides, they would occasionally fall back on strategic ignorance and fund Nazi-oriented scientists against better American judgement.

Yet if some German scholars pretended to stick to thoroughly descent “pure” and a-political science, or purely neutral “basic” as opposed to decidedly political “applied” research, such contemporary tropes mixed up implausibly naïve fiction and dishonest tactics. As it turned out, German scientists across the whole spectrum of natural and human science disciplines became complicit with the regime’s bellicose and inhumane agenda including violent racist oppression, war, brutal population policies and expulsions and the planning of genocide. Thus, governmental mobilization “from above” and voluntary self-mobilization of individual German researchers coalesced.

Against this background, the role of RF funding remains highly symptomatic: Rockefeller money was certainly not the decisive driving force for the science-induced machineries of technocratic excess and mass murder under Nazi auspices. Yet philanthropists sojourned with and acknowledged German knowledge production in the 1930s. Thus, they were present at a moment which appears, in hindsight, as part of a political–scientific saddle period of increasingly radical German research practices preceding the eventual climax of inhuman social engineering since the outbreak of the Second World War. Yet at that point, the RF had already left the German scene. The historical question whether and to what extent philanthropy transgressed ethical boundaries in each and every moment and project funded in post-1933 Germany seems nowhere near a definite answer.



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## 9 Hektor Ammann's *völkisch*<sup>1</sup> idea of medieval economics and the place of Switzerland in Nazi-dominated Europe

*Fabian Link*

On 15 November 1940, a text signed by 173 Swiss citizens was submitted to the Federal Council of Switzerland proposing to censor Swiss journalists' increasingly critical stance toward Nazi Germany. The leader of the "submission of the 200", as the text came to be known, was Hektor Ammann (1894–1967), state archivist of Argovia, director of the library in Aarau, and renowned historian of medieval economics (Simon 1995, p. 29; Waeger 1971, p. 18, 25).<sup>2</sup> After the defeat of the Nazi regime, journalists from both the left and the right urged the Federal Council to publish the text and make public its signatories. In a search for scapegoats, "the 200" were ripe targets: the public regarded them as traitors and their submission as an attempt to align Switzerland with the Nazi regime (Waeger 1971, pp. 7, 23, 25). Politicians were forced to react to public outrage and took legal action against the leading members of "the 200". As a result, in the summer of 1946, the Canton of Argovia dismissed Ammann from his positions as archivist and director of the library ("Urteil vom 11. Dezember 1946 in der Sache Dr. Ammann gegen Aargau", *BGE* [Entscheidungen des Schweizerischen Bundesgerichts] 72: I: pp. 282–291).<sup>3</sup>

Though the public undoubtedly overestimated the influence of "the 200" on Swiss politics, several high-ranking politicians, intellectuals, professors, officers and industrialists were involved in this affair. The post-war investigation by federal authorities also revealed that, several times during the Second World War, Ammann and some of his co-authors met with Klaus Hügel to discuss Switzerland's future in the Nazi "Großgermanisches Reich". Hügel was head of the section Stuttgart of the intelligence service of the SS (SD), commissioner of the SD to support pro-German movements in Switzerland, and leader of the Alemannic Study Group, a regional association connected with the SD. Hügel told his Swiss discussion partners that the regime expected from the Swiss Federal Council adjustment to German politics and economic interests. In turn, Ammann and his comrades-in-arms tried to relay to Hügel Swiss citizens' anxiety about the Nazi regime's military aggression and the violent character of



the SA and other Nazi organisations (Fahlbusch 2009, p. 42). After 1945, Swiss newspapers interpreted these meetings as a conspiracy between representatives of “the 200” and the SS, who were thought to be planning Switzerland’s *Anschluss* to Nazi Germany.

During the war, there were many other similar submissions in which anxious Swiss citizens proposed a politics of appeasement and adaptation. In the “Federal Collection” from August 1941, for example, the initiators called for the surrender of Switzerland’s neutrality principle. For this reason, Gerhart Waeger, one of the first authors to document the “submission of the 200”, and who was implicated in this affair himself, questioned Swiss newspapers’ and politicians’ focus on it after 1945. “Why didn’t anybody ask about the members of the several ‘Fronts’?”, Waeger (1971, p. 32) asked, referring to the Swiss fascist leagues. But in the case of the “submission of the 200”, it was not small groups of dedicated fascists who tried to undermine Swiss democracy, but distinguished members of the middle and upper bourgeoisie who gave the impression of having collaborated with Nazi authorities in order to create for Switzerland something similar to the Vichy regime in France (see Tanner 2015, pp. 261–262, 300).

Since the late 1980s, scholars have investigated the involvement of German and Austrian historians in the Nazi regime and their ideological reconciliations with fascism and radical-conservatism. Talented historians who made their careers in the Federal Republic, such as Hermann Aubin, Karl Bosl, Werner Conze, Erich Maschke, Theodor Mayer and Theodor Schieder, had not only supported Hitler’s state and profited from the regime, but, as in the case of Schieder and Conze, also had offered their expertise for the development of Nazi foreign and settlement policy by addressing the exploration of the “German cultural soil” in the eastern, western, south-eastern and northern regions of Europe (see Schulze and Oexle 1999; Haar 2000; Etzemüller 2001; Mühle 2005; Dunkhase 2010; Kedar and Herde 2011; Nonn 2013; Heinzl 2016; Schneider 2016). This chapter investigates a historian from a neutral state – rather than a scholar from Germany and Austria, countries generally considered centres of Germanocentric ideology – to explore his wide network of *völkisch*-nationalist colleagues and his motives for collaborating. This example demonstrates that before the seizure of power by the Nazis, an international network of German-speaking scholars with *völkisch* attitudes consisting of Germans and Austrians, Germanocentric Alsatians, Flemings, South Tyroleans, Sudeten and other members of German minorities in Europe, but also of representatives of neutral states such as Switzerland, had worked already on the intellectual legitimisation of a German-dominated Europe. After 1933, they became supporters of and experts for the ethnic politics of the Nazis and helped each other to continue their careers in the post-war era. This international dimension of *völkisch* scholarship is largely neglected in the research literature, an observation that applies especially to Hektor Ammann.<sup>4</sup>

This chapter traces Ammann's trajectory from his early political and scholarly works in the 1920s to his position as professor of medieval economic history at the universities of Mannheim and Saarbrücken in the late 1950s. Ammann's political ideology was interrelated with his conception of medieval economic history, and he legitimised his political positions through his historical investigations. To demonstrate this entanglement of political ideology and scientific ideas, this chapter illustrates the development of Ammann's ideology and reconstructs his intellectual milieu. It then investigates his ideas about economics in the late Middle Ages, before exploring Ammann's trajectory in the post-war period and continuities in his ideology.

### **Germanocentrism, radical-conservatism and Swiss neutrality**

Hektor Ammann was raised in a petty bourgeois family of Argovia. He studied history and geography in Zurich, Berlin and Geneva from 1914 to 1920 and completed his studies with a dissertation supervised by Gerold Meyer von Knonau, a Germanophile historian at the University of Zurich (Ammann, H. 1938 [curriculum vitae] Personal archive of Ammann [PAA], no. VIII.183. Zurich: Archive for Contemporary History (AfZ); Fahlbusch 2009, pp. 38–39; Simon 1995, p. 30). His professors in Berlin, geographer Albrecht Penck and historian of the Hansa Dietrich Schäfer, maintained a pan-Germanic worldview and belonged to the Pan-German League (Chickering 1984; Hering 2003). It is no coincidence that Schäfer's successor in 1922 was Albert Brackmann, one of the leading figures of German *Ostforschung* (Eastern Studies) (Hübinger 2016, p. 119). In 1920 and 1921, Ammann travelled for six months throughout Germany and eight months throughout south-eastern Europe to collect archival material for his studies on late medieval economics and on the language borders in these regions. Along the way, he established a wide network of archivists and economic and regional historians in German-speaking Europe. In 1929, he was appointed state archivist of Argovia and director of the library in Aarau (Ammann, H. 1938 [curriculum vitae], PAA, no. VIII.183. AfZ; Simon 1995, pp. 30–31; Fahlbusch 2009, p. 39).

Ammann's academic competence and the originality of his approaches to medieval economic history would have allowed him to pursue an academic career. However, according to Christian Simon (1995, p. 31), Ammann lacked "a certain affability that faculty members appreciated in their future colleagues", and he did not want to become a professor's disciple. But the main reason for Ammann's stalled academic career was that some professors from the University of Zurich vetoed his *venia legendi*, the qualification for becoming professor, because of his Germanocentric ideology.

Germanophilia was not uncommon among intellectuals and academics from the left and the right in the German-speaking regions of Switzerland before the First World War and among members of the liberal party (formerly the Free Democrats in Switzerland) such as Hektor Ammann (Simon



1995, p. 31).<sup>5</sup> Because Germanophilia did not imply the later meaning of *völkisch* nationalism and German superiority in the period, Ammann's more radical Germanocentrism before the First World War was rather uncommon. In 1913, he became interested in the "language question" and searched for demographic and topographic shifts between the French-speaking and German-speaking Swiss populations, focussing on the bilingual Canton of Jura (Simon 1995, p. 32; Fahlbusch 2009, p. 38).<sup>6</sup> Although German speakers constituted the majority of Switzerland's population, Ammann felt that they were being threatened by the expansion of France and Italy, with their military power and fertile populations. In his opinion, post-war France and fascist Italy wanted to destroy German language and German culture (Ammann 1928a, p. 11; Simon 1995, pp. 33–34). For Ammann, Switzerland's national character was constituted by German culture, whereas Romanic influences were alien. Culture was the constitutive concept for Ammann's Swiss *völkisch* ideology, not blood or race (Simon 1995, pp. 32–33).

The First World War radicalised Swiss Germanophiles' ideology. After the German Reich declared war on Russia on the Swiss National Day of 1 August 1914, approximately 220,000 Swiss soldiers were mobilised, while Ulrich Wille was elected supreme commander for the duration of the war, against the will of French-speaking Swiss politicians, Social Democrats and the central cantons. Although the main goal was to preserve Switzerland's neutrality, Wille strongly sympathised with the Germans and maintained friendly relations with Bismarck's family. The Federal Council, the majority of which also was pro-German, trusted Wille because of his Germanophilia and connections to German military officials and politicians, and thought that he was the right man to preserve Switzerland's sovereignty and independence (Tanner 2015, p. 119, 121). The opposing loyalties of German-speaking and French-speaking Swiss citizens opened a deep gulf reinforced by the Swiss media's propaganda. Intellectuals and artists were profoundly divided. In 1915, circles around the Germanophile clergyman Eduard Blocher founded the Voices in the Storm, an association that pursued an aggressive pro-German rhetoric and fuelled the fear of a "Frenchifying" of Switzerland (Tanner 2015, p. 128). Blocher later became a member of the People's Federation for the Independence of Switzerland (VUS), in which Ammann also enthusiastically participated.

Ammann sympathised with the German Reich and was elected secretary of the German–Swiss Association (Simon 1995, p. 32). Like many other radical-conservatives, Ammann did not engage in political parties but in a non-party league, the VUS, of which he became secretary in 1923 and later president (Simon 1995, pp. 30–31). Besides the Swiss Patriotic League, in which Ammann was a member as well (The Secretary of the Vereinigte Schweizerische Bürgerwehren [Schweizerischer Vaterländischer Verband], 8 August 1921 [circular letter], PAA, no. VIII.187. AfZ), the VUS was the most important of the many associations that emerged in the post-war era

advocating anti-Socialism, anti-Bolshevism, anti-internationalism and anti-Semitism. The VUS aimed for the return to full neutrality and sovereignty of Switzerland and opposed the international politics of the League of Nations (Tanner 2015, pp. 163–165).

Around 1920, Amman met Adolf Hitler to discuss Hitler's ideological programme (Simon 1995, p. 33). He also maintained contacts with German *völkisch* politicians such as Hans Steinacher, head of the Association of Germandom Abroad (Pietschmann, V. 1921/22 [circular letter], PAA, no. 214.117. AfZ). From the early 1920s, Ammann cultivated contacts with several Swiss radical-conservatives and *völkisch* organisations such as the German-Speaking League, the Association of Conservation and the National Movement (Fahlbusch 2009, p. 39), and he maintained relations with representatives of a German *Volkstumspolitik*, particularly in Southern Tirol and the Flemish country (Reut-Nicolussi, E. 14 April 1927, to Ammann, Hektor [letter], PAA, no. 214.122. AfZ; Riedl, R. 27 November 1928, to Ammann, Hektor [letter], PAA, no. 214.45. AfZ; Imendörffer, B. 6 November 1921, to Ammann, Hektor [letter], PAA, no. 214.45. AfZ). Among his contacts was Eugen Bircher, a Swiss Germanophile and reactionary physician and division commander, who – alarmed by the general strike in 1918 – organised civil defence corps to counter the feared socialist revolution (Bircher, E., 30 May 1922, to Ammann, Hektor [letter], PAA, no. 214. AfZ; Tanner 2015, pp. 163–164). In 1934, Ammann became a member of the administrative board of the *New Newspaper* of Basel, which was shut down by the city government of Basel in 1939 because of its sympathy for the Nazi regime (Ammann, H., 7 November 1938, to Boerlin, Gerhard [letter], PAA, no. 214.9. AfZ).

In his political articles, predominantly published in the *Swiss Monthly Magazine*, the journal of the VUS, Ammann considered democracy and neutrality to be the specific characteristics of Switzerland. Democracy, in its conservative-republican and authoritarian form,<sup>7</sup> was for him rooted in the “old Germanic common life”, which historically flourished in the rural community (Simon 1995, pp. 33–34). Ammann had a particularistic view of cultures: democracy was characteristic of Switzerland, *völkisch* and authoritarian state politics were characteristic of Germany, and fascist “totalitarianism” was the essence of Italy, which was for him alien to Swiss culture. He radically opposed Swiss fascists, the Frontists under Colonel Arthur Fonjallaz, because they regarded Italian fascism as their model (Simon 1995, p. 35). Italian fascism and German National Socialism were not equivalent to Ammann. For him, Italian fascism was connected with irredentism, which Ammann considered a danger for Switzerland, because irredentists claimed the Canton of Ticino to be part of northern Italy (Ammann 1929/30, pp. 339–341). In contrast, Ammann strongly sympathised with the Nazis in the 1920s. In his view, they represented a *völkisch* awakening of the suppressed German people and the fiercest opponents of Bolshevism and France's imperial politics in Europe. To Ammann, France's politics and Bolshevism represented the



biggest challenges to Swiss autonomy, whereas National Socialism guaranteed Swiss neutrality and sovereignty (Ammann 1936/37, pp. 508–509; Simon 1995, pp. 34–35). Thus, neutrality, the second major characteristic of Switzerland, was tightly connected with Ammann's Germanocentrism. It was not the League of Nations that guaranteed Switzerland's neutrality, but a Europe dominated culturally and economically by Germany, because Switzerland and Germany were for Ammann congenial to each other (Ammann 1935, p. 267; Simon 1995, pp. 37–40).

Germany's invasion of Poland in 1939 and its occupation of France in 1940 did not convince Ammann to revise his Germanocentric ideology or his concept of neutrality. Rather, he fervently emphasised his ideas about Swiss neutrality and independence, eventually concluding that Switzerland should be ruled by a more authoritarian government and be integrated into the German-dominated "Großgermanisches Reich", albeit as an autonomous member of this community of authoritarian-ruled states. This was the background to the "submission of the 200". Such ideas were common among the right-wing bourgeois elite, even among high-ranking politicians like Marcel Pilet-Golaz, one of the seven federal councillors at the time. Although Ammann might have been on the extreme end of this nationalist and Germanocentric ideology, his opinions were tolerated. The main reasons that Ammann was dismissed from his positions in 1946 were his collaboration with the SD and that he did not revise his notion of a Switzerland as part of a German-dominated Europe even after the German defeat at Stalingrad and Switzerland's new orientation towards the Western allies. Ammann rejected an approximation to England and the United States and pursued his ideas in public, thus endangering his career (Simon 1995, pp. 39–40; Tanner 2015, p. 311).

### **Economic history and the idea of a Germanic Reich in the Middle Ages as ideal social order of contemporary Europe**

Hektor Ammann belonged to a generation of scholars situated between the "front generation" and the "war youth generation", born in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. For members of these generations, the First World War meant a radical break with the world of their fathers, whose bourgeois values they considered "mechanistic" and "empty". These scholars developed new concepts and approaches for analysing the world scientifically, in particular the relationship between "scholarship" (*Wissenschaft*) and "worldview" (*Weltanschauung*) (Gordon 2010, pp. 52–64; Hachtmann 2007, pp. 274–280; Herbert 1991; Wildt 2005). After the First World War, radical-conservative and *völkisch* scholars began searching for a firmer foundation for scientific reality. This new reality entailed a holistic concept of scientific knowledge reuniting science and the humanities, including the application of a multitude of methods such as statistics, cartography and demography, which should produce knowledge applicable to the needs of revisionist and

*völkisch*-nationalist politics (cf. Oberkrome 1993). Scholars today categorise this research complex as “*völkisch* research”. The emerging social and intellectual field of *völkisch* research was driven predominantly by younger scholars who – inspired by zoologist and geographer Friedrich Ratzel, settlement and regional historian Karl Lamprecht, and Lamprecht’s assistant in Leipzig Rudolf Kötschke – opposed the dominance of political history, which they identified with the “mechanistic” 19th century. These scholars considered themselves representatives of a new and innovative field (Simon 1995, pp. 42–43; Heinzel 2016, pp. 34–36).

Several research fields in the humanities of the German-speaking world from the 1920s to the 1940s, such as folk and cultural soil research, regional, folk, and settlement history, and cultural space research, belonged to this research complex. *Völkisch* research was an intellectual project that aimed to develop scientific arguments for the de-legitimisation of the Versailles Treaty. The first institution of folk and cultural soil research, the Foundation of German Folk and Culture Soil Research, was founded in Leipzig in 1920, followed by the foundation of the Folk-German Research Organisations in 1931. These organisations constituted a broad network of regional and art historians, geographers, scholars of folklore studies, linguists, archivists, librarians and politicians who advocated a Germanocentric ethnic politics (*Volkstumspolitik*), including historians Albert Brackmann, Hermann Aubin, Otto Brunner, Theodor Mayer and Franz Steinbach. They were arranged into several sub-organisations, researching the German or Germanic traces in the south-eastern, north-eastern and western regions of Europe to demonstrate their Germanic ancestry (Fahlbusch 1999, pp. 65–73, 2000).

Ammann was part of this network, conducting correspondence with representatives of these organisations, participating in conferences and meetings of the West German Research Organisation, conceptualising new research projects in cooperation with other members of these organisations, publishing in the main journal of the Volksdeutsche Forschungsgemeinschaften (VFG, Folk-German Research Organisations), and serving as assistant director of the Research Organisation of the Alpine Countries (Fahlbusch 2009, p. 40, 2002, pp. 48, 56–58, 65; Murmelter, E. 8 August 1935, to Ammann, Hektor [letter], PAA, no. 214.96. AfZ; Oszwald, R. P. 29 October 1937, to Ammann, Hektor [letter] PAA, no. 214.111. AfZ; Brackmann, A. 9 October 1936, to Ammann, Hektor [letter] PAA, no. 214.11. AfZ. Also see Ammann 1937a, 1939; Heinzel 2016, pp. 64–65, 137–142, 145). Ammann also promoted the re-foundation of the Alemannic Institute in Freiburg im Breisgau under his friend Theodor Mayer, and he facilitated its integration into the VFG in 1934/35. From 1935 to 1938/39, he directed with Mayer the Study Group for Historical Regional Studies at the University of Freiburg (Seiler 2015, pp. 193–213; Heinzel 2016, pp. 123–130, 133).

Ammann’s approach to late medieval economic history was innovative at the time. Ammann went beyond historicism, which focused on great men, state politics and historical events. Instead, he explored economic structures,



made use of a great variety of sources and applied space as an analytical category, which included methods of cartography, statistics, demography and archaeology (e.g. Ammann 1926, 1937b, 1937c, p. 181). Space was a core concept of *völkisch* research that generated new perspectives and research objects: scholars concentrated on the natural environment, trading routes, towns, material culture and law, and analysed the spatial relations between these historical entities (e.g. Aubin *et al.* 1926; Ammann 1928b; see Oberkrome 1993, p. 27; Simon 1995, pp. 42–43). Because Ammann was a leading member of regional cultural and historical associations such as the Argovian Association for Conservation, he directed investigations of medieval castles and villages, applying a combination of archaeological, geographical and historical methods, and he supported the foundation of associations for cultural heritage preservation (The Commission for Homeland Security of the Canton of Argovia, Switzerland 12 April 1928 [strategic paper], Aargauer Vereinigung für Heimatschutz, files 1935–1937, ZwA1987.0013.0005. Aarau: State Archive of the Canton of Argovia [StAAG]).<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, Ammann reorganised the state archive of Argovia, centralising the various sources – in particular those from the Middle Ages – that were lying in local archives, compiling registers and conserving documents to make them accessible for scholars, and enlarging the book stock of the library in Aarau (File A/0093/04. StAAG. Also see Ammann, H. 19 September 1932, to the Department of Education of the Canton of Argovia [letter] A/0093/05. StAAG).

Innovative methodological approaches, solid empirical research, and *völkisch* and revisionist ideology were not mutually exclusive (Oberkrome 1991, 1993). Ammann conducted ground-breaking studies, such as his investigations of Geneva's late medieval fairs and the discovery of one of the leading Swiss–German merchant houses in the linen industry, the Diesbach-Watt-Association (Ammann 1928c). His explorations of European trading routes, studies of late medieval towns and their economic, cultural and political relations with each other, and his research of notarial sources were and still are valuable (Simon 1995, p. 42).

One of Ammann's research interests was the development of economics and demography in the German-speaking and French-speaking regions of late medieval Switzerland (ca. 1400–1550), especially the relationship and balance of power between these regions. French-speaking Switzerland included partly Berne, Fribourg, Solothurn, Geneva, Valais and Neuchâtel. With the exception of the trading route, it was an economically weak region. In Ammann's (1937b, pp. 395–397) estimation, only Geneva was a place of commerce. Focussing on the development of Geneva's economy, Ammann argued that the town flourished economically and culturally every time that it was under "upper German" influence, but experienced cultural and economic decline under French rule. Ammann saw upper German merchants not only as reformers of the economy, but also as bearers of superior culture (Simon 1995, p. 43). This superior German

culture was in Ammann's view decisive for France's economy. Although Ammann (1936, 1939, p. 332) did not deny that France's economy was strong from the 12th through the 14th centuries, he emphasised that the heyday of the Champagne fairs in France correlated with the period in which German merchants visited the fairs frequently.

Ammann (1939, p. 306) attributed characteristics of economic behaviour to linguistically defined groups of peoples he called "Volkstümer", such as the Germans and the French, that emerged in the early Middle Ages. In his opinion, the German merchant was "definitely the active part" and dominant force in the relationship between French and German merchants, and was more entrepreneurial than his French counterpart (Ammann 1936, pp. 62, 73; 1939, pp. 307, 309–310, 328–333). Ammann identified these *völkisch*-cultural characteristics in the different economic abilities of upper Germans and Alsatians. According to Ammann (1928d, p. 42), Alsatians were strongly influenced by the French, which resulted in a certain passivity or laziness. Even though the Alsace region was rich in resources, the citizens of Alsatian towns did not become successful merchants. This passivity supposedly left room for German merchants, who expanded their trading routes from the 12th century onwards. This period of prosperity endured until the 16th century, followed by a rapid decline from which the German economy could never recover (Ammann 1928d, p. 38, 1927, p. 115). Ammann's narrative was one of cultural rise and decline, where a rise was coupled with the power of the upper German economy in the high and late Middle Ages, and decline was connected with the loss of German influence.

According to Ammann, the regions of medieval Switzerland belonged to the upper German cultural and economic space, although Ammann (1935, p. 267, 1937a, p. 139) saw Switzerland as an independent, multicultural and multilingual nation. But the main characteristics of Swiss culture were rooted in its close ties to upper Germany. German-speaking Switzerland had an important role in the formation of the upper German economic space, particularly with respect to wine, metals and financial transactions (Ammann 1927, pp. 116–117). However, the main article of commerce, for which St. Gall in North-east Switzerland and the whole region of Lake Constance would become famous, was linen (Ammann 1928e, p. 136). Linen from Lake Constance was distributed by Italian merchants to the South, while the French brought it to south-eastern France and the Iberian Peninsula. It was sold in Geneva, Lyon, Avignon, Montpellier, Barcelona, Saragossa, Valencia and Antwerp, in the fairs of the Champagne region of northern France, and in Vienna and Hungary (Ammann 1928e, pp. 139–140). Ammann (1928e, pp. 140–141) not only tried to demonstrate that the linen industry of the Lake Constance region was of European importance, but also that this linen was the first article of commerce that raised the upper German economy to the level of the dominant power in European commerce. Crucial for this boom were merchants from upper Swabia, who founded a number of trading houses, such as the Great Association of



Ravensburg in the 15th century and the houses of the Fugger family and the Welsers in the 16th century. St. Gall dominated this economic zone of Lake Constance, because its quality linen was in high demand. In the 15th century, St. Gall replaced Constance as the centre of the upper German linen industry (Ammann 1928e, pp. 143, 146).

Ammann legitimised his political opinion about the contemporary position of Switzerland in Europe's culture and economy under Nazi rule through his explorations of medieval history. Switzerland was "organically" congenial to Germany, but it had its own characteristics, such as conservative-republican democracy and neutrality. In 1935, Ammann published an article on the Old Swiss Confederacy, in which he stated that Old Switzerland was based on loose and federalist associations of peasants and citizens. These associations were smashed by the "ideas of the French Revolution", when in 1798 the French military imposed the Republic of Helvetia on the Swiss. This state did not last long. After Napoleon's defeat, Switzerland turned again to a loose federation predominantly under aristocratic leadership (Ammann 1935, p. 262). For Ammann, France was an aggressive power whose egalitarian ideas were incompatible with the conservative-republican democracy he thought to be characteristic for Switzerland. According to Ammann (1935, p. 264), the cantons and the rural communities were the central organisations of Swiss politics, as opposed to a powerful state that diminished the freedom of Swiss citizens.

In summary, three ideological elements in Ammann's writings reveal the tight connection between his political ideology and his scholarly thinking and scientific praxis. First, upper Germany appears as an economic, cultural and political space, and this space was the driving force for prosperity in the high and late Middle Ages (Simon 1995, p. 43). For Ammann, as for his colleagues Theodor Mayer and geographer Friedrich Metz, the region of the upper Rhine was a space constituted by a consistent "Volkstum" (Seiler 2015, pp. 245–279; Heinzel 2016, pp. 47, 115–117). While Mayer considered German culture a force of superior quality that brought high culture and economic recovery to the regions it colonised (Heinzel 2016, pp. 57, 65–66, 72–73), Ammann thought that German culture and economics promised prosperity. Second, and connected with this Germanocentric ideology, Ammann criticised egalitarian democratic principles, which he identified with the French Revolution. French culture and economics brought nothing but decline, in the Middle Ages as in the modern period. Third, the German merchant, influenced by the economic and cultural space in which he was born and raised, appears as an archetype with certain characteristics, such as activity, diligence and the will to establish economic infrastructures. This last ideological element was Ammann's specific version of the cultural space ideology advocated by *völkisch* thinkers and later the Nazis.

Although Ammann never used terms such as "race" or "blood", he maintained a cultural variety of *völkisch* essentialism. What is not to be found in Ammann's political and scholarly writings is anti-Semitism. This is not

surprising, because Ammann nowhere mentioned the Jews, even though they played an important role in municipal economics and in the cattle trade in the upper German economy during the Middle Ages. There is only one map in Ammann's whole work illustrating "the business area of the Jews of Murten around 1400", published in an article from 1944, which Ammann (1944) let pass without further comment. Any interpretation of this ignorance of the Jews remains pure speculation, but it seems apparent that for Ammann, the Jews did not belong to the "Volkstum", and hence were not part of the medieval economy.

### **Ammann's career in post-war West Germany: ideological continuities and medieval history**

When Hektor Ammann was dismissed by the Canton of Argovia in 1946, he considered himself the victim of a defamation campaign and an opportunistic state now currying favour with the Allied-ruled Europe. Although Ammann defended himself before the federal court and wrote a statement of self-defence for the press on 27 January 1946 (Waeger 1971, p. 38), his idea of an independent Switzerland through convergence with Nazi Germany, which he advocated before 1945, remained suspect to the Swiss public of the early post-war years. Even after 1945, he was still convinced about the validity of his *völkisch* ideas, he copyedited the pro-German and revisionist journal *Neue Politik* from 1949 to 1952 (Simon 1995, pp. 41–42).

Ammann launched a second career in 1955 when he received an honorary professorship at the business school in Mannheim. After a guest professorship, he was appointed extracurricular professor for economic history at the University of the Saarland at Saarbrücken in 1958 and became director of the Institute for Regional and Cultural Studies of the Saarland in 1960. In 1961, Ammann finally received the rights of a full professor (Ammann, H., Prof. Dr. Wirtschaftsgeschichte [23 July 1894 to 22 July 1967] 12 August 1958 [questionnaire], Personal file of Ammann, PN-90365. Saarbrücken: University Archive; The Dean of the Philosophical Faculty 3 July 1957, to the Rector of the University of the Saarland [letter], Personal file of Ammann, PN-90365. Saarbrücken: University Archive; The Minister for Culture and Education of the Saarland 27 March 1967, to the Rector of the University of the Saarland [letter], Personal file of Ammann, PN-90365. Saarbrücken: University Archive). It is highly probable that the network of *völkisch* scholars established in the 1920s was helpful to Ammann's advance. Its members, such as Aubin, Mayer and Steinbach (Fahlbusch 2002, p. 63),<sup>9</sup> regained positions at universities or non-academic research institutes in the early 1950s or simply continued their careers immediately after 1945 (Simon 1995, pp. 41–42; Etzemüller 2001, pp. 213–223; Rusinek 2003; Nagel 2005, pp. 24–51). Particularly helpful were Theodor Mayer, who became director of the Municipal Institute for Regional Studies of Lake Constance Region in 1951 and was an influential figure in medieval history in post-war West



Germany through his Constance Study Group (Heinzel 2016, pp. 236–245, 255–258), and Franz Steinbach, professor at the University of Bonn and director of the Institute for Historical Regional Studies of the Rhineland, who resumed his positions in 1948 after having served in the *Wehrmacht* (Simon 1995, p. 42). In his letter of recommendation for the University of the Saarland from 1957, Steinbach emphasised that Ammann, “concerning knowledge about sources and regional research achievement will not be exceeded by any other economic historian of German tongue”. He also noted that Ammann was an expert in European economic and municipal history (Steinbach, F. 1 March 1957 [letter of recommendation], Personal file of Ammann, PN-90365. Saarbrücken: University Archive).

Serving as professor in West Germany, Ammann did not appear as political author in public anymore, but concentrated on academic life. He received honourable positions, such as the corresponding membership of the Flemish Academy of Sciences in 1950, memberships in historical commissions of Hesse, Baden-Württemberg, and the Saarland, and the post of secretary of the Commission for Municipal History in the International Historical Association (Meynen 1969, p. 45, 57; Pinwinkler 2014, p. 417). Ammann’s reputation as an innovative medieval historian who focussed on social and economic structures and applied new methods, and whose works were free from *völkisch* and nationalist ideas, emerged from the post-war era when he researched and taught at West German universities and groomed a wide range of disciples (Simon 1995, p. 42, see Hlawitschka 1967). This view of Ammann is more a construct than reality. While it is easy to argue that Ammann steered clear of obvious *völkisch* and racist terms, it is not difficult to identify the Germanocentric and radical-conservative ideas in his works. These ideological elements remained unnoticed in the guild of historians because the majority of West German historians in the 1950s and the early 1960s agreed with them (Nagel 2005, pp. 116–155).

Ammann also slightly adjusted his ideas in the post-war years. For example, in an article published in 1954, he no longer conceived of upper German merchants as bearers of superior characteristics, but demonstrated that their mercantile expeditions brought new ideas, such as Luther’s doctrine to the region of Geneva. He described his approach as an innovative attempt to connect economic history with the history of ideas (Ammann 1954, p. 151). Ammann (1954, pp. 159–160) wanted to show that early bourgeois urban culture, the “urban independence that was characteristic for the German region”, was mediated by German-speaking merchants to the French parts of Switzerland. However, in the 1950s, Ammann made no secret of his aversion to the “ideas of 1789”. For him, the imperialist occupation of Switzerland by French troops in 1798 brought not only the demise of the Old Swiss Confederacy, but led the Swiss population into economic, political and moral ruin (Ammann 1952, pp. 237–238).

Focussing on Hektor Ammann’s trajectory from the 1920s to the 1950s, this chapter has demonstrated that at least since the Weimar Republic, a

broad network of Germanocentric and *völkisch* scholars existed in the German-speaking parts of Europe. This network remained powerful after 1945 and influenced German academia essentially. Without the support of this network, Ammann's career in post-war West Germany would not have been possible. This chapter has taken Ammann as case study – further and more systematic research should engage with this international dimension of *völkisch* research and the connection of its representatives to international politics.

## Notes

- 1 There is no coherent translation of *völkisch* in the English language. *Völkisch* means ethnic, but it also encompasses the meaning of a cultural superiority as well as nationalist and biologicistic ideas on peoples and states, which often refer to racial thinking. The nearest translation in English would be ethnic-nationalist or ethnic-racial.
- 2 The other six initiators of the submission were Caspar Jenny, Andreas von Sprecher, Heinrich Frick, Emil Friedrich, Fritz Rieter, and Rudolf Grob.
- 3 Ammann's appeal only resulted in an abatement of his disciplinary punishment, but could not avert his dismissal.
- 4 Ammann's scholarly oeuvre and his political ideology are not well researched. Christian Simon (1995) and Michael Fahlbusch (2002, 2009) published critical articles on Ammann's involvement in the scandal of the "submission of the 200", his political ideology, scientific ideas and his scholarly network. However, a major biography of Ammann particularly concerned with his career after 1945 is still pending.
- 5 Germanist and Scandinavist Andreas Heusler (1865–1940) and author Jakob Schaffner (1875–1944) are only two prominent examples of this disposition. See Siegrist (1995, pp. 55–57).
- 6 Ammann published these investigations in the *alldeutsche* journal *Deutsche Erde*.
- 7 A similar concept of democracy was decisive for Matthias Gelzer's book *Nobilität der römischen Republik* (The Nobility of Roman Republic) from 1912. See Simon (1988, p. 225). Cultural historian Carl J. Burckhardt maintained a similar political attitude. See Stauffer (1995, pp. 113–121).
- 8 One of these projects was the excavation and conservation of the castle Alt-Tierstein in in the Canton of Argovia. See Ammann (1934/35, p. 4). Also see Ammann, H., Prof. Dr. Wirtschaftsgeschichte (23 July 1894 to 22 July 1967) 1958 [curriculum vitae] Personal file of Ammann, PN-90365. Saarbrücken: University Archive.
- 9 Many of these historians contributed to Amman's Festschrift to his 70th birthday, among others Erich Keyser, Friedrich Metz, Edith Ennen, Hermann Kellenbenz, Theodor Mayer, H.C. Peyer, Franz Huter. See Aubin *et al.* (1965).

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## 10 An agent of indirect propaganda

### Normalizing Nazi Germany in the Swedish medical journal *Svenska Läkartidningen* 1933–1945

*Annika Berg*

In the first issue of *Allmänna Svenska Läkartidningen* (The General Swedish Medical Doctors' Journal) – pre-published on 9 December 1903 – its editor, the liberal anatomist Knut Kjellberg, proclaimed that the new journal aimed to deal with issues related to the social, scientific and economic interests of the Swedish doctors, as well as the doctors' relations to the general public, to each other and to the authorities. Additionally, the journal aimed to cover a range of social questions of growing importance, in which “the doctor's voice ought to be heard”. Thus, it explicitly made room for political statements and discussions. Society, it was stated, could not afford to dispense with the kind of advice, grounded in scientific and practical experience, that doctors could provide on a great number of the social questions that were presently on the agenda. Debates on social issues were also described as important for the doctors themselves as a “corporation” (Redaktionen [Kjellberg, K.] 1904, p. 2).

*Svenska Läkartidningen* (SLT) as the journal was renamed in 1920, was published by Sveriges Läkarförbund (SLF, Swedish Medical Association). In 1965, when the journal was remade into a more journalistic format, its name was shortened once again, to the present one: *Läkartidningen*. In line with the objectives stated in the 1904 editorial, SLT came to function as a scientific journal as well as a professional one, epitomizing the medical corps as a collective with both mutual interests and a kind of expertise that was scientific and clinical as well as more broadly “social” in its potential application. In other words, the journal functioned as a medium for representing a medical *persona* in a wide sense of the word – internally, in front of the members of the medical corps, as well as externally, in front of a non-medical public. By the end of the 1930s, it was estimated that the journal reached nearly all Swedish doctors, who by that time numbered around 3,200 (Karlsson 2004, p. 21).

As the years went by, the journal would often come to function as a pitch of controversy within the medical corps. For example, it provided the main arena for a heated debate about the reception or non-reception of Jewish specialist doctors to Sweden in 1939–1940 (Berg 2009, pp. 220–228, 2016, pp. 78–85; Högberg 2013, pp. 185–187; cp. Larsmo 2007). Similarly, it came



to house the lion's share of an almost as fiery debate on proposed health-care reforms in the late 1940s (Berg 2009, pp. 250–261, 2016, pp. 86–87).

However, debates on health policy and professional issues only constituted a minor part of the journal's content. Most of its space was taken up by other kinds of material, such as reviews over international research, reports about medical and organizational innovations, scientific articles, reports from international conferences, and more elaborate travel reports. If debates on controversial issues mirrored conflict and heterogeneity within the medical corps, less controversial genres could instead serve to represent the medical corps as a collective. This collective was not necessarily a consensual one. But taken as a whole, its narratives would seem to indicate a medical mainstream, illuminating tendencies and commonly shared ideals.

In practice, however, that representation was a bit of an illusion. The journal was produced by an editor, who, during the 1920s and 1930s, simultaneously functioned as secretary of SLF, backed up by an editorial board which was more or less identical with the association's executive committee. During the first decades, the editor normally functioned as publisher too. From 1940, the CEO of the association usually functioned as publisher (Karlsson 2004, pp. 19–20, 23). Thus, behind a veil that appeared to represent the Swedish medical profession as a whole, the editors – backed up by leaders of the SLF – could put together the journal much to their own liking, and potentially use it for political purposes other than such that were strictly related to healthcare policy.

The genre of travel reporting is of particular interest in this respect. Non-controversial yet potentially political, this genre relates to at least one of the main themes of this book, that of professional and scientific exchange between Nazi Germany and other countries and the role of such exchange in relation to various sorts of cultural propaganda.

In this chapter, I will explore how *SLT* in the 1930s and 1940s, by way of its publication of travel reports, could function as an agent of “brown” or pro-Nazi propaganda – at the same time as it kept on representing the Swedish medical corps as a professional and scientific collective.

## A “pro-German” editorship

A starting point for this investigation is that J. P. Edwardson, who was the editor of *SLT* from 1937 to 1940 and its publisher from 1940 to 1949, was very “pro-German” (*tyskvänlig*), to use a common euphemism, along with several others in the group of people who made up the core of SLF.

Born in 1898, Edwardson had initiated his career under the wings of Herman Lundborg, director of the Swedish State Institute for Race Biology in Uppsala. Edwardson started working as an anthropologist and race biologist at the Institute in the mid-1920s, in parallel with his medical studies in Stockholm. After obtaining his licentiate in medicine in 1929, he almost immediately got a position as race biologist and deputy director of

the Institute (Bissmarck 1934, p. 160; Högberg 2013, p. 43, 104; on Lundborg, see e.g. Broberg and Tydén 1996, 2005; Hagerman 2015). Lundborg's protégé apparently shared a number of ideological convictions with his increasingly anti-Semitic mentor (Broberg and Tydén 1996, p. 93, 2005, pp. 48–49; Hagerman 2015, p. 315). As early as 1934, Edwardson publicly opposed asylum for Jewish physicians in Sweden. As ombudsman for SYLF (the association of younger doctors in Sweden), he then sent out a petition to protest against the suggestion that Bernhard Zondek, a German-Jewish professor of gynaecology who was already in Sweden as a guest researcher, should get a Swedish medical license and work permit and thus be able to stay in the country. Edwardson managed to collect more than 1,000 signatures against Zondek (Högberg 2013, pp. 116–117). In the late 1930s, when discussions about a proposed “import” of German-Jewish doctors rose high on the public agenda, Edwardson was highly active on the anti-refugee side (Anon. 1939; Berg 2009, pp. 221–222, 226, 2016, p. 77; Dahlberg 1940; cp. Högberg 2013, p. 44; Höjer 1975, p. 193). Axel Höjer, general director of the Royal Medical Board and a leading pro-refugee voice, characterized Edwardson on as “competent but Nazi-coloured” (Höjer 1975, p. 193). Edwardson was also a member of both Riksföreningen Sverige-Tyskland (The National Association Sweden-Germany) and Svensk-Tyska Föreningen (The Swedish-German Association) (Högberg 2013, pp. 84–85).

In 1936, by intervention of Gunnar Myrdal, the increasingly controversial Herman Lundborg was replaced by the left-leaning Gunnar Dahlberg as director of the State Institute for Race Biology, and the institute deliberately set out to change its focus, from physical anthropology and mainline eugenics to human genetics and what has later been characterized as reform eugenics (Broberg and Tydén 1996, pp. 91–95, 2005, pp. 46–52). At the beginning of 1937, Edwardson moved on to SLF and *SLT* (Karlsson 2004, p. 23). In this context, he was far from alone in having “pro-German” sympathies. In the 1930s and 1940s, four of the members, and three of the substitute members, of the central board of SLF were members of Riksföreningen Sverige-Tyskland (Högberg 2000, p. 3307, 2013, p. 84). Among those people were for example the paediatrician Curt Gyllenswärd, who was the chairman of SLF in 1940–1941 and also an active participant in the debate against “import” of Jewish doctors. (Berg 2009, pp. 225–227, 2016, pp. 82–85; Högberg 2013, p. 33), and Dag Knutson, who was a member of the openly Nazi organization Samfundet Manhem (The Manhem Association; Högberg 2000, p. 3307, 2013, p. 85). Gustaf Myhrman, who superseded Edwardson as editor of *SLT* in 1940, used his position to act as one of the most ardent opponents against Jewish medical refugees (Berg 2009, p. 226).

However, these sympathies and connections were not that apparent to the readers. *SLT* hardly ever included any editorials – the one in the first issue was a bit of an exception. Instead, the journal's profile was largely shaped by the selection of articles. As it was first and foremost a medical journal,



politics were seldom at the centre of the articles. Still, many articles had a political tendency or dealt with subjects with potential political consequences. Quite a large proportion of writers caught the opportunity to discuss topics with political bearing.

This does not mean that the journal was an outright mouthpiece for National Socialism, or even homogenously “pro-German”. A range of dissenting voices were heard in it. My point, however, is that the journal, despite or even because of its diversity, could function as an agent of more indirect propaganda. And perhaps more effectively so as it could give the impression of housing a broad and free debate, including a spectrum of opinions, which would seem to reflect the medical corps as a whole. But what were the colours that dominated this spectrum? This study will show that, at least when focussing on the genre of travel reporting, there was indeed a discursive drift rightwards during the Nazi era, which was not fully representative of the medical corps as a whole.

### **A genre with a German tilt**

From 1918 to 1945, over ninety travel narratives about journeys away from Sweden were published in *SLT* (summary reports from conferences excluded). From 1933 to 1945, the number was 45 in total.

A majority of the travel reports dealt with journeys that had been undertaken for some kind of educational purpose, but journeys were conducted for a number of reasons and the travellers moved in a number of different settings. With this diversity in mind, the proportion of travel reports that treated Germany is quite conspicuous. To judge from the travel reports in *SLT*, Germany was by far the most popular destination when Swedish doctors ventured abroad. In a way, this should come as no surprise. For years and years, Germany had been the traditional point of reference and place to go for Swedish academics aiming to widen their horizons (Åkerlund 2010, pp. 23–25; Almgren 2005, p. 20; cp. Brissman 2010, pp. 136–142). During the latter part of the Weimar period, half of all travel reports, that is 16 out of 32 reports published between 1926 and 1932, treated Germany. The striking thing is that this pattern did not change dramatically when the Nazi regime rose to power. Judging from *SLT*, Swedish physicians kept travelling to Germany as the 1930s went on, keen on reporting on innovations in healthcare and other fields under the new regime. One third (10 out of 32 travel reports) published between 1933 and 1938 included Germany. And when war broke out, the proportion actually surged to an even higher level than in the late Weimar years. As many as five out of nine travel reports published in 1939–1941 included Germany, and a further two focussed on countries that were presently occupied by, or co-operating with, Germany. Only two of those nine articles focussed on countries – Iceland and Switzerland – that were independent from Germany. Only in the last years of the Second World War did Swedish physicians stop reporting from Germany – but at that time they had practically stopped going abroad at all.

Previous research has pointed at continuous intellectual exchange between Sweden and the Third Reich, not least in regard to the medical part of Swedish academia (Almgren 2005; Åkerlund 2010; Hansson 2013; Högberg 2013; Björkman *et al.* 2016). My study confirms the existence of such an exchange. But the publishing patterns in *SLT* do not necessarily mirror the travels and political sympathies of the Swedish medical corps overall. These are of course hard to trace. But some revealing comparisons can be made. An earlier survey of travel reports that were sent in to Svenska Läkaresällskapet (SLS, Swedish Society of Medicine) 1918–1950 did show a quite different pattern in the choice of destinations – including a sharper decline in German-bound journeys after 1933 – than that indicated by the travel reports in *SLT*. In this material, the USA stood out as the most popular destination by far, an inclination that can only be partly explained by the big surge in travels to the US after the Second World War (Brissman 2010, pp. 262, 273–278, 465–466, cp. also 139–149, 246). Notably, in contrast to SLF, the SLS at least strived to be a strictly scientific – that is apolitical – association (Brissman 2010, pp. 261–267). The travel reports sent in to the SLS may also be seen as more representative of the Swedish medical corps, or at least the travelling part of it, insofar as every doctor who received a travel grant from the society was obliged to write a report about his use of the grant (Brissman 2010, pp. 275–276). The differences therefore indicate that the political sympathies of the editor and/or publisher of *SLT* did indeed have influence on the selection of travel reports, and the countries and destinations treated in them.

The number of travel reports dealing with Nazi Germany that were published in *SLT* suffice to show a strong German inclination, especially when set in proportion to the number of reports dealing with other countries, and in relation to comparable collections of travel reports. Still, statistics can only say so much. I will, therefore, now turn to a qualitative analysis of content and discourse in the texts at hand, exploring how Germany, the Germans and German politics were pictured in the travel reports between 1933 and 1945.

### **A scarcity of criticism**

When read more closely, the travel reports reveal a rather great variation in the ways that medical travellers handled the political circumstances in Germany and the occupied territories during the Nazi period. Some travel writers were neutral in tone and content, others outright enthusiastic, and there was also a spectrum of voices in between. But hardly any of the writers directed any outright critique against Germany.

The psychiatrist Torsten Ramer, who went to Germany in 1934 in order to study the treatment of young “psychopaths”, was an exception. In his report, Ramer showed an unusual scepticism about the German situation as it was mirrored in the Nazi regime’s harsh attitude toward children with special needs:



That whole branch of child psychology and child psychiatry that works with children who are difficult to educate (Fürsorge für jugendliche Psychopathen), is presently going through a very difficult struggle. The primary cause of this seems to be that the current regime in Germany believes that such children are inferior material, on which no unnecessary expenses should be spent.

(Ramer 1934, p. 1563)

Before the takeover (*Machtübernahme*), there had been around ten centres for counselling and education of “difficult” children (*Beratungsstellen für Heilerziehung*) in Berlin only. Now, one year later, there was only one centre left, and it got no public funding whatsoever. Because of the precarious situation, Ramer left Berlin after just five days and moved directly on to Switzerland. Ramer’s critical voice was one of a kind. Notably too, his article was published before Edwardson’s time as editor. That much said, the silence that followed does not necessarily indicate censorship – most likely more sceptical, liberal or left-leaning, medical doctors largely avoided travels to Germany during the Nazi period, and especially so during the war.

### **Apolitical accounts**

Before the war, many travel reports were quite neutral in tone and content. Despite the radical changes that were taking place in Germany at the time, their authors threaded lightly over the subject of politics or made no mention of it at all. An example of a rather neutral writer is Ingeborg Kjellin, one of very few women who wrote travel reports in *SLT* and the only one who went to Germany in the Third Reich era. Kjellin – whose first report was published in 1936 – had studied the life stories of 130 vegetarians and made a close examination of about 50 of them, concluding that their diet had led to surprising results. Many of the vegetarians, she wrote, were highly cultivated and socially well-established people, who had started their diet on recommendation from foreign, mainly German, doctors. This, Kjellin (1936, pp. 1385–1386) stated, was why she had set off on her journey, starting at the oldest vegetarian hospital in Germany, Priessnitz’sches Krankenhaus,

named after the man with the wet-warm wrapping, if I am allowed to express myself so irreverently about the highly talented farmer Priessnitz, who may well be regarded as one of the originators of our modern water and bathing therapy.

Kjellin’s article about “the weird people known as vegetarians” (1936, p. 1385) and various more or less eccentric doctors promoting such a diet was rather long and unusually humorous. However, although this was in 1936 and she seems to have travelled through various parts of Germany, Kjellin mentioned

nothing about the political system or situation in the country. Neither did she delve into politics when writing about a journey to fascist Italy the year after, although she wrote with appreciation about the fascist effort to preserve cultural heritage as well as build new monumental buildings, such as the new impressive tuberculosis clinic in Rome that should have been named after Mussolini but instead had been named after the scientist Corlo Forlanini; a generous gesture by Il Duce, as Kjellin (1938, pp. 472, 476) put it.

Carl A. Fürst (a tuberculosis doctor and the son of the more well-known anatomist and race biologist Carl M. Fürst) wrote a long and personalized but politically neutral report about his travels in Germany. For example, Fürst found it worthwhile to explain to his readers that he had found his May 1937 visit with Dr. Walter Schmidt at the Rohrbach sanatorium so rewarding that he decided to spend much of his summer vacation in the Heidelberg area, combining studies with pleasure. This was because, he wrote,

a lovelier place than Heidelberg is hard to find, full as it is of possibilities for excursions in a grand environment and for folklore studies in the evenings, while making acquaintances with townsmen at the historic pubs (*Kneippen*) over a seidel of good beer or a cup of natural wine (*Naturwein*).

(Fürst 1938, p. 413)

At the beginning of June, Fürst (1938, p. 413) returned to Heidelberg by way of a 160 km/h Zeppelin train ride and a “lovely trip on the Rhine, soothing for the soul”; he was greeted “very cordially” and was offered the opportunity to watch any surgical procedure of interest to him. Fürst wrote extensively about the hospital, about architecture, care organization and surgical methods. But not a word about the political situation. Admittedly, this was before the war. Still, under the circumstances, writing in such detail about the likability of Germany without mentioning the political situation at all might perhaps be interpreted as political in its very avoidance of political discussion. At what point in a politically volatile situation or process does an apolitical stance turn into a political one? Arguably, this is a more generally relevant question too.

Some pre-war travellers mentioned politics but avoided to take a clear stance, or used their experience to disavow worries that the new regime was headed in an extreme direction. Allan Beskow (1934, p. 1176), a junior doctor who made an educational trip to Rohrbach and a number of other German sanatoria in the spring of 1934, kept his narrative on a largely technical level, although he finished his report by observing that “a striking number” of his German colleagues were “warm supporters” of the new regime. He noted that the new regime had already made strong efforts to co-ordinate tuberculosis care country-wide, in line with the “National Socialist tenet” that “the power of the state was largely dependent on the



health of the individual state member”, and that new legislation, that underscored not only the rights of people with lung disease but also their obligations to the state, was underway, as well as an intensified use of “the state’s own apparatus of propaganda”. However, Beskow’s impression was that those National Socialists who had propagated for forced sterilizations a couple of years ago had not prevailed in their efforts.

In January 1935, Einar Westerberg wrote extensively about the ongoing large-scale and thorough reorganization of the German aviation sector, or more precisely, as Westerberg put it, the sectors of traffic airlines and sports aviation. After the treaty of Versailles, Germany was not allowed to have its own military air force. The recent massive influx of aspiring pilots had underscored the importance of organizing and systematizing medical examinations of candidates and pilots, including personality assessments. Apparently without knowing, what Westerberg described was in fact Hermann Göring’s undercover reconstruction of the air force (Luftwaffe), which was revealed for what it actually was in March 1935, less than two months after Westerberg published his report (Killen 2003, pp. 49–61).

Even long into the war, it happened that doctors wrote detailed reports but still managed to avoid politics. In the summer of 1939, the psychiatrist Erik Goldkuhl went on a trip to various psychiatric institutions in Germany, Switzerland and Denmark. When reporting about the trip in 1941, he did not write a word about the present political situation in Germany, finishing his report with the reflection that his experiences could be grouped around “one single, important wish: an intensification of Swedish psychiatric care” (Goldkuhl 1941, p. 912).

### **Approval and enthusiasm**

However, most of the writers combined medical and anthropological observations with at least some comments on politics. Many were quite verbose and a number of writers were outright enthusiastic about the Nazis – in relation to healthcare but also in relation to other policy matters, or more generally.

In April 1938, the paediatrician Wilhelm Wernstedt (1938, p. 639) wrote enthusiastically about a study trip he had made in the summer of 1937, including a number of German cities:

Germany of today was interesting to see already in its outer physiognomy. It is bursting with energy and initiative. In Berlin, huge piling machines were panting on in Saarlandstrasse, at work for the Underground Railroad; large blocks are destroyed, new monumental buildings have been erected or are being erected – manifestations of strength that testify that a magnificent exterior construction work is in full swing. And yet what Berlin of today may offer must be nothing compared to that which is coming, when the gigantic construction of the national capital’s exterior configuration is completed in the way *Hitler* has intended it.

Everywhere there are uniforms, giving you an almost terrible impression of war preparations. But soon you realize that many of the uniformed people moving around do not belong to the armed forces. Even though their uniforms are greatly reminiscent of the military, they largely belong to non-military organizations such as SA, SS, *Arbeitsdienst*, *Hitlerjugend*, etc.

Wernstedt's general enthusiasm turned into open support of the Nazi government when he (1938, pp. 640–652) defended the new racial laws as a necessary measure against the supposedly disproportional political influence of the German Jews. He also defended the very comprehensive German laws on sterilization and marriage, and wrote with great appreciation of two new governmental bodies that had been instituted to improve racial hygiene, the national board for public health, and system of health departments (Reichsausschuss für Volksgesundheitsdienst and Gesundheitsämten). Furthermore, Wernstedt wrote very appreciatively about things such as Hitlerjugend and the expurgation of degenerate art (*entartende Kunst*).

After the war had started, Wernstedt published another report, focussing on a congress on therapeutic pedagogy (*Heilpädagogik*) in Switzerland in July 1939. The article was based on a speech in front of the SLS in late November 1939 and published in 1940. In this report, Wernstedt (1940, p. 240, 252) avoided to take a political stance, expressing himself in the more ambiguous terms of “the precarious international circumstances” and “these bleak times”.

Also, C. A. Yllner wrote about Germany both before and after the outbreak of war, having travelled there in 1938 and 1939 to explore healthcare organization and occupational health. In his first article, focussing on occupational health in the Third Reich, Yllner (1938, p. 1279) was very enthusiastic about the developments in Germany:

The overall impression that one gets as a stranger visiting Germany these days, is that people everywhere are working with energy and enthusiasm, that the social barriers have vanished in a way that has hitherto been unimaginable, and that within all fields there are strong efforts to capture and protect the nations' greatest asset, namely the human labour force.

In his following and more detailed travel report, Yllner refrained from more general political comments. However, he concluded that Germany, thanks to good organization, hygienic expertise and hygienic surveillance in the industrial sector, had come a very long way towards the goal to protect workers from occupational ailments “to the highest degree that is possible”. He also wrote with some appreciation about the museum of hygiene in Dresden, and especially its effective way of educating people about racial difference and threats to the Aryan bloodline:



Accidents and occupational disease and their immense importance, especially in such an industrialized country like Saxony, were here presented in an educational and sometimes quite effective manner.[ – ] Naturally, the new racial theories were demonstrated in the museum too, and one would have to look far to find something more drastic in that respect than the terrible images of the descendants of the Senegalese negroes that held the Rhineland under occupation 1923–1925.

(Yllner 1940, p. 121)

Here again, there may be other ways of showing support for a regime than outright approvals of its political system or political measures. Yllner's continuing appraisal of scientific, technical and organizational progress, as well as the racist ideology that underpinned Nazi politics, provides an example of this.

Even authors who avoided political remarks were often full of praise for technical achievements of various sorts. Medical of course, but also others, such as the Zeppelin train that took Carl A. Fürst to Heidelberg, or the aviatorial expansion commented on by Westerberg. To various degrees, most travellers also wrote about administration and organization. Some reported more neutrally about organizational change, while others underscored that German organizational skills had developed in a remarkable way under the new regime.

As the war carried on, the travel reports generally became more explicit in their approval of the political system in Germany, probably mirroring the fact that few people other than outright supporters of the regime went to Germany at this time. One of the writers was Åke Berglund, who was not only a Nazi supporter, but a well-known organized National Socialist. Berglund was active in Svensk socialistisk samling (SSS), led by Sven Olov Lindholm, and even stood for parliament as a candidate for SSS in the 1944 elections. The conservative daily newspaper *Svenska Dagbladet* referred to Berglund as “the Nazi doctor”, and SÄPO, the Swedish Security Service, kept a thick file on him where he was described as “a fanatic Nazi” (Brissman 2010, pp. 262–264; cp. Högberg 2013, pp. 86–87; Lööw 2004, pp. 25–43).

In a 1940 article, drawing on experiences from a 1937 educational journey, Berglund (1940, p. 1459) wrote about the recent efforts to integrate “school medicine” and “biological medicine” into a new kind of German medicine, dismissing “Nazi hostile” claims that the Nazis were promoting quackery by way of this integration, which was now being institutionalized in, for example, the Rudolf Hess Krankenhaus in Dresden. Thanks to the “authoritative” leadership of the German medical corps, it had prevailed in the leading position, paving the way for a truly new German medicine, “in the sign of racial hygienic thought” (Berglund 1940, pp. 1461–1462). Some good ideas, on for example the value of fresh air, bathing, herbal remedies and vegetarian food, had been appropriated from the “biological” doctors. But at the same time, a strict law against quackery had been implemented,

“in a way that is possible only in an authoritarian state” (Berglund 1940, p. 1461). Ultimately, Berglund (1940, p. 1462) saw the controversies around alternative medical treatments as part of a more overarching battle between “analytical” and “synthetical” thinking, that would soon – with the new world that was emerging from “the embrace of the world crisis” – lead to a true synthesis, and a time of reconstruction.

Lennart Norrlin revealed his colours when claiming that the overriding impression from his journey to Germany was that of *Führertum*, defined by Norrlin as “responsible leadership” rather than “demagogy or repression of thought”. Norrlin spent a month in Germany in the autumn of 1940, with permission to work in Nürnberg and also visit Berlin, München and Erlangen. Initially, Norrlin had planned to stay for at least two months but changed his mind when he discovered that there was really no need for foreign doctors. Instead, he wrote, he came to spend most of his time on “political, cultural and social studies”, which led him to the conclusion that Germany and the Germans were strikingly strong, materially as well as morally (Norrin 1941, p. 676). The industrial production of substitute materials was so effective that no citizen was badly dressed or hungry, there were no beggars on the streets and unemployment was unheard of.

The whole thing gives the impression of order, stability, culture, and civilisation; a society where great freedom prevails, but not arbitrariness. Of course, discontent can be encountered here and there, but where in the world is there no such thing? Truly unhappy people or slave types are impossible to find either on the streets or in the homes.

(Norrin 1941, p. 680)

Blackouts and restrictions did not demoralize the people, according to Norrlin. Quite the contrary, people filled up restaurants, variety shows and cinemas, went in for gymnastics and other sports, and procreated to such a degree that “the continuity of the race” could likely be secured. Norrlin (1941, p. 681) ended with the conclusion that “all peoples, not least the Swedish, have a lot of things to thank the Germans for, and more to learn and emulate in their country than to criticise”. Other writers refrained from praising the Führer, but their vivid depictions of the Germans as a cheerful and sturdy people, admirable in their determination to build a bright future and have fun along the way, were very similar to those of Norrlin.

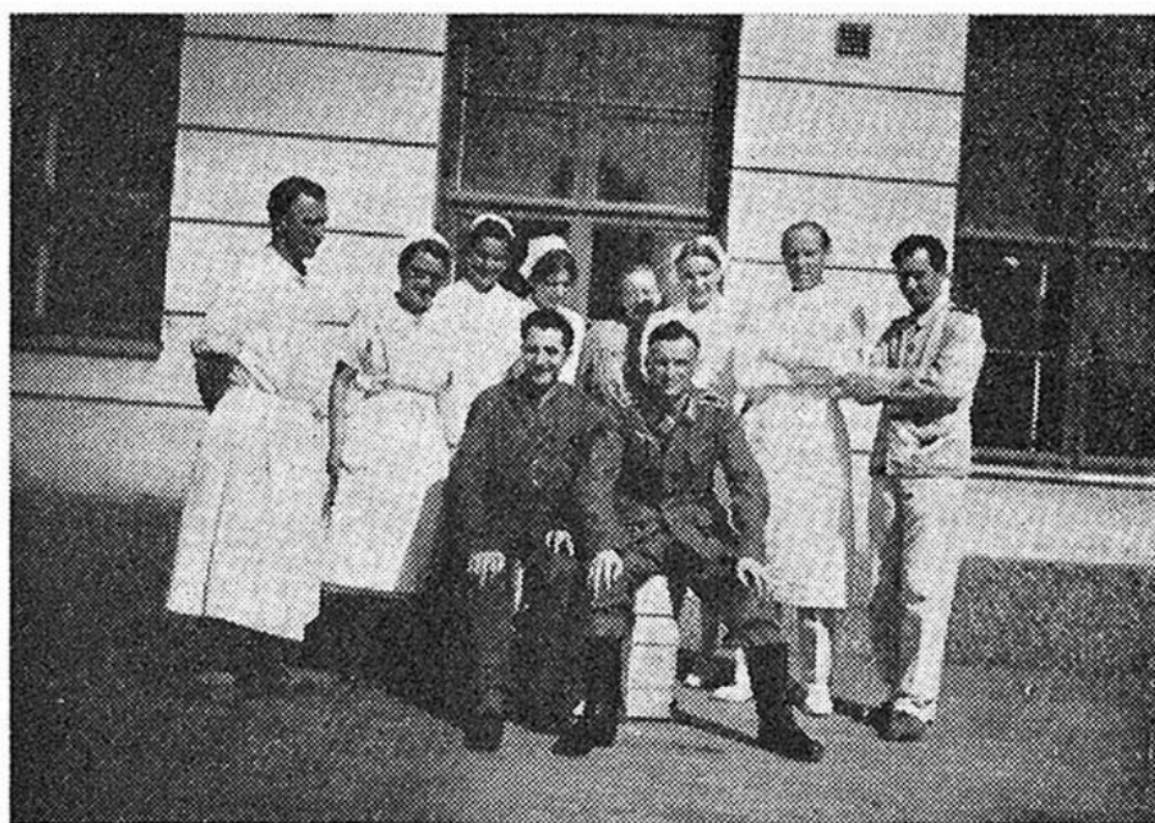
Fredrik Koch, a young doctor who went on a six-week journey – between September and November 1940 – to study war surgery at German field hospitals in Belgium and Northern France, was as impressed by the Germans’ organizational skills, cooking and hospitality as he was by the surgical techniques in use. He also visited some French hospitals, and one run by the American Red Cross in Neuilly, as well as the Pasteur Institute, where things seemed to carry on as usual. Koch’s travel report ended in a romantic description of the collegial handshakes he had seen being exchanged between



German and French surgeons in Paris, “working in the sign of the red cross, that does not distinguish between friend and enemy” (Koch 1941, p. 100).

The surgeon Bertel Bager reported about an “officially commissioned” group journey to Berlin in August and September 1940. In Berlin, a chief army surgeon had prepared the programme for Bager and his colleagues, Olof von Zweigbergk and Sievert Lindvall, and peppered it with visits to a range of hospitals: big military hospitals as well as civil hospitals and schools that had been appropriated for war surgery. Bager (1941, p. 479) was highly impressed by the Germans’ friendliness and hospitality, and the “exemplary order” that prevailed everywhere. And apart from occasional bomb raids, there were, according to Bager, few signs of the country being at war: “Restaurants, cinemas and theatres were packed and no gloomy atmosphere could be noticed”.

“Pro-German” propaganda could be visual as well as verbal. In mid-July 1941, the surgeon Hugo Rosenqvist travelled, together with two other Swedes, to the north of Finland to work as a volunteer at the German field hospitals there. In his text, Rosenqvist (1941) did not make any outright political statements; still his portrayals of comradely work, of exciting excursions to territories newly conquered from the Russians, of small-scale and large-scale dinners with frugal food and lavish amounts of wine, singing and wild discussions, and of gentle flirting with the German nurses and Finnish so-called *Lotta* volunteers, helped to mediate a picture of life at the war front as a kind of international summer camp for grown-ups. The sympathetic picture mediated by the text was amplified by a number of photographs where medical personnel and soldiers were seen fraternizing with each other in playful situations, and even the Russian prisoners of war appeared to have a good time (see Figures 10.1–10.4).



*Läkare, väblar och översköterskor på  
krigslasarett.*

*Figure 10.1* “Doctors, low rank officers and headnurses at a war hospital”, all smiling (Rosenqvist 1941).



*Fältfrukost med tyska läkare.*

Figure 10.2 “Field breakfast with German doctors”, all smiling (Rosenqvist 1941).

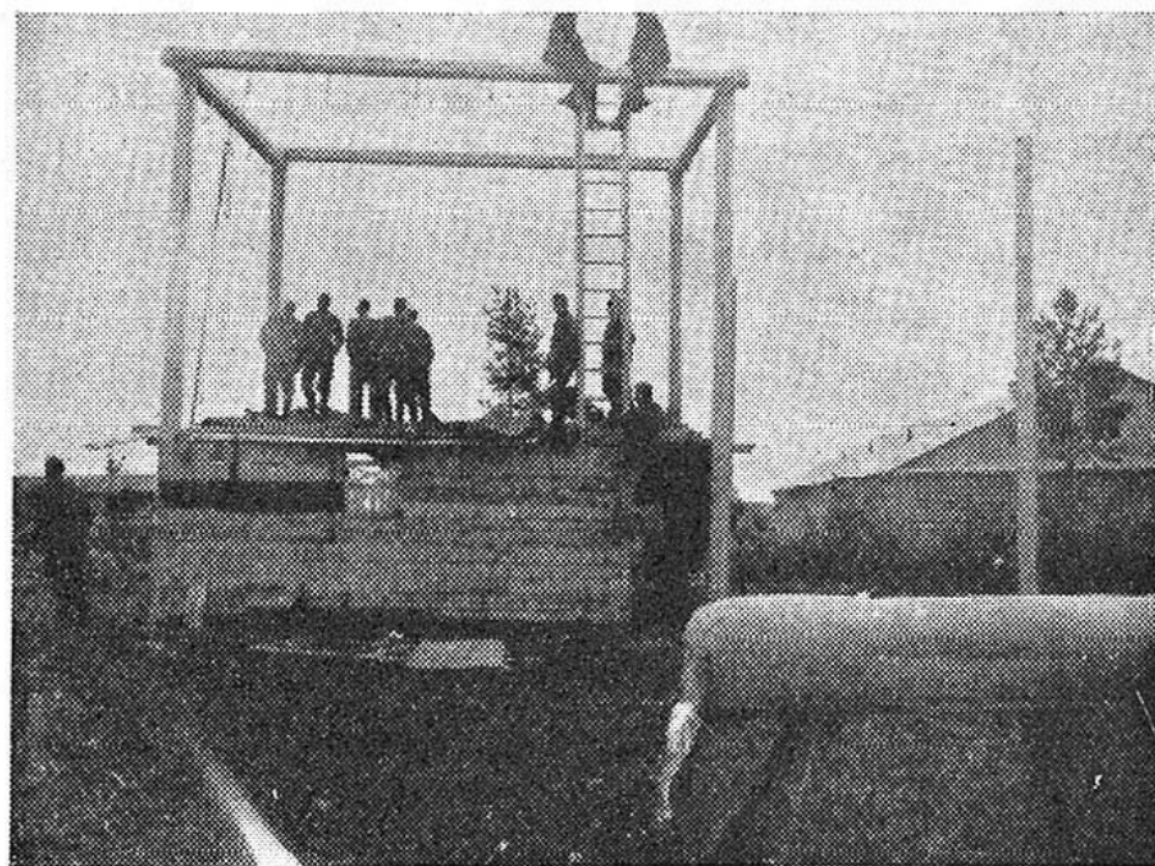


*Ryska krigsfångar fingo tjänstgöra som vedhuggare och vägarbetare på vårt fältlasarett.*

Figure 10.3 The caption of this photograph, showing a group of smiling, even laughing, men in similar uniform, says “Russian prisoners of war got to serve as woodcutters and road workers at our field hospital” (Rosenqvist 1941).

Up until 1941, physicians continued to write positive accounts of travels and voluntary work in Germany proper as well as its occupied territories. From 1942 and onward, German travel narratives didn’t change – they vanished. However, at this time, Swedish physicians had all but stopped traveling abroad altogether. Between 1942 and 1945, only four travel accounts were published in *SLT*. In 1942, there was a report on rescue work after air raids in England (von Greyerz 1942) and then, in 1942 and 1943, two consecutive reports on tuberculosis childcare in Swedish-speaking Åboland in the southwest of Finland (von Sydow 1942; Larson 1943). In 1944, the only





*De ryska gymnastikställningarna användes som utkiksplats, då Stukas gingo till anfall i frontlinjen. Obs. »hästen», som blivit flådd på lädret, då ryssarna flydde.*

Figure 10.4 The caption of the photograph notes that “The Russian gymnastics equipment had been used as a lookout when Stukas [German bomber aircrafts] went to attack on the frontline. Observe the ‘horse’ that had been skinned when the Russians fled”, leaving no doubt about the writer/photographer as perceiving himself to be on the winning side (Rosenqvist 1941).

travel report published in the journal was a retired doctor’s memoir of his student years in London in the 1890s (von Rosen 1944).

## Conclusion

Arguably due to its editorial bias, a disproportionate amount of travel reports from Germany were published in *SLT* during the Nazi era. Notably, the proportion of reports that dealt with Germany did not wane considerably after the Nazi regime rose to power, and, strikingly, it rose to record levels when the war broke out. Swedish doctors continued until 1941 to write largely positive reports about travel, studies and voluntary work in Germany and its occupied territories. Often, the travellers made more visibly political remarks as well, ranging from neutral or indifferent to enthusiastic. Direct criticism was rare to the point of non-existence.

The individual writers sometimes appear as active agents of propaganda, sometimes as more passive mediators of propaganda directed at them in Germany or its occupied territories. But whatever motives that prompted the writing of these travel reports, their publication in the journal collectively helped to create a distinct picture of travelling to Germany and its occupied territories, even in the midst of war, as a worthwhile and constructive, even nice experience.

Arguably, by keeping the journal open for debates that displayed a broad spectrum of opinions, while at the same time prioritizing “pro-German” and pro-Nazi voices in “neutral” genres such as travel reporting, the editor

and publisher helped to push the discourse and the limits of normality rightwards in a rather insidious manner.

The publication of more or less “pro-German” travel reports could thus function as a discrete and indirect way of pro-Nazi propaganda-making. As *SLT* represented itself as a voice for the Swedish medical corps as a whole, it also helped its editor and publisher, and the rest of the leadership of SLF, to contribute to an image of the profession as more homogeneously “pro-German” than it actually was. This propaganda could work outward, toward the general public, but also, and perhaps more importantly, given that the journal was primarily directed at the doctors themselves, inward, affecting the contours of the normative medical *persona* and shading it with a slightly browner tint.

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# 11 Transnational encounters in science

## Knowledge exchanges and ideological entanglements between Portugal and Nazi Germany 1933–1945

*Cláudia Ninhos*

Portugal had lived under a dictatorship since 1926 when a military coup d'état toppled the First Republic (1910–1926). During these years, António de Oliveira Salazar emerged as a charismatic leader, first as Minister of Finance, then as head of the government because he had achieved an economic miracle by taking the necessary steps to balance Portugal's public finances. A new constitution approved in 1933 established an anti-parliamentarian, authoritarian and corporatist regime, the *Estado Novo* (New State). That same year, Hitler came to power in Germany. Naturally, German diplomacy took advantage of the political and ideological similarities between the two regimes and also of the fact that Germany was seen as the most advanced country scientifically. The German Legation in Lisbon coordinated and fostered German–Portuguese relations by arranging study visits of professors, journalists and scientists between the two countries, and organising exhibitions and receptions with the support of other German organisations such as the Hitler Youth, the German-Portuguese Society and the Ibero-American Institute of Berlin. The increasingly intense cultural and scientific co-operation between Nazi Germany and the Portuguese *Estado Novo* was not only motivated by ideological reasons but also by Portugal's search for a model of scientific practice and its pursuit of innovations and knowledge in a country that was supposed to be at the forefront of science and education. This academic exchange was an important element of Nazi cultural propaganda abroad.

The Portuguese historiography of science has experienced a huge increase in recent years due to the creation of departments and doctoral programmes on the subject. However, there are few works that have tried to articulate the history of science and scientific development with the politics and ideology of the Portuguese authoritarian regime (but see Tiago Saraiva 2009, 2010, 2016a, 2016b; Saraiva and Wise 2010).

In this chapter, I will analyse the relations between Portugal and Nazi Germany, focussing on scientific exchange and knowledge transfer in the field of genetics and adopting a transnational approach (Yun Casalilla 2014) to the complex history of German–Portuguese involvement.



Connections that linked the two countries together will be mapped, with a focus on personal contacts between scientists at international conferences and during internships in Germany in order to understand who the Portuguese scholars were, where they practised and which scientists influenced them. They were transnational actors in the sense that they belonged to a network that covered not only Portugal and Germany but was also linked to other countries and through which ideas and knowledge circulated. These movements and interactions of both people and ideas transcended national frontiers and cut across different political regimes. The networks were “transnational spaces of communication and interaction”, of cultural and scientific exchange, which I will try to reconstruct, analysing the dynamics and the eventual tensions that resulted from these relations (Müller and Torp 2009, pp. 613–614).

For this essay, I have chosen only a small group of Portuguese scholars who studied in Germany. The analysis is not restricted to the National Socialist regime but also looks at some historical precedents. These scholars were chosen for their importance within the Portuguese academic and scientific communities and for the fact that, although they belonged to a variety of different scientific disciplines, they all shared a common interest – genetics. They went to Germany attracted by the developments in genetics taking place there and when they returned to Portugal, they brought back important scientific knowledge and new methodologies which they then introduced in their own country.

### **Scientific exchange between Portugal and Germany**

There were various reasons why Portuguese scientists chose Germany as a destination throughout this period. Portugal was a peripheral country and had for a long time felt the need to come closer to the centres of European science, to which many German universities as well as the Kaiser-Wilhelm institutes still belonged during the Weimar and Nazi periods. In Germany, Portuguese scientists had an easier time getting access to journals, for reading and to publish their research. Furthermore, in Germany, they would be able to learn firsthand about the latest scientific developments, including advanced techniques and methods.

From the 19th century, there had been a drive to internationalise Portuguese science, but for many years, this ambition was of limited scope and depended on private initiatives (Salgueiro 2015, p. 14). Only in 1911 were universities founded in the country's two main cities, Lisbon and Porto, and only in 1929 was an institution – the Junta de Educação Nacional (JEN, National Education Board) – set up to promote academic exchange and funding individual grants as well as institutes and laboratories (Fitas 2013; Fitas *et al.* 2012; Rollo *et al.* 2012). There was at this time a lack of equipment and a lack of specialised technical staff in Portugal (Fitas 2008; Salgueiro 2015). According to Flávio Resende, one of the scientists who

benefited from JEN's programme of academic exchange (see below), the university courses were too theoretical due to a lack of laboratory facilities (Resende, F. 25 May 1932, to the National Education Board [report], File 1215/34: document 1. Lisbon: Camões, I.P. Archives). There was also a lack of research funding. During the 1930s and 1940s, Portuguese researchers primarily aimed to emulate science in Germany and France which is why scholarship holders from JEN and the organisation that followed it, the Instituto para a Alta Cultura (IAC, Institute for High Culture), mostly travelled to these countries. JEN promoted participation in congresses, academic exchanges and short-term internships. Sciences such as medicine, agronomy and the different fields of engineering were regarded as the main bastions of economic development which is why the majority of Portuguese scholars, including those who headed for Germany, came from these areas.

Before the First World War, German science had been seen as a model in Portugal as well as in the rest of Europe and the US. Once the country had entered the war on the side of the Entente, admirers of German science and culture subscribed to the "two Germanies" idea, thus upholding the notion that political issues could be separated from scientific and cultural ones (Gödde-Baumann 1981). As the Nazis came to power in Germany and Salazar in Portugal, relations between the two countries became more intense economically as well as ideologically. This was reflected in scientific relations. From 1933, JEN strengthened its ties with Germany and an exchange agreement was signed with the *Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst* (German Academic Exchange Service). Academic exchange continued, albeit to a lower extent, throughout the Second World War, when Portugal was neutral. It was advantageous for both parties: for the Portuguese, because they gained access to German scientific knowledge and resources; for the Germans, because scientific exchange was a vital part of cultural propaganda.

### **Aurélio Quintanilha and the introduction of genetics in Portugal**

The rediscovery of the Mendelian laws of inheritance at the turn of the century was a determining factor for the development of genetics. Information about the rediscovery quickly reached Portugal but did not have an immediate impact (Archer 1992; Gago 2009, pp. 23–28).

One of JEN's first scholarship holders was Aurélio Quintanilha, who chose Germany as the country in which to do a long-term internship. He graduated from the faculty of sciences of the University of Lisbon after having spent some time in the faculty of medicine where he was taught cytology, histology and embryology, all of which he would later apply to biology.

In 1925, he finished his doctorate at the University of Coimbra, begun in 1923, with a thesis on the evolutionary life cycle of a fungus (Quintanilha 1926). Among his readings were works on genetics, a subject that in Germany was heavily influenced by the study of cytoplasmic inheritance (Harwood 1987,



p. 393; Gago 2009, p. 7). Quintanilha's academic thesis focussed on genetics, which was a pioneering topic in Portuguese universities in the late 1920s.

Despite having finished his doctorate and having attained the position of full professor, he continued to feel a pressing need to undertake an internship abroad with a "great master" (Quintanilha 1975b, p. 36). He managed to get an internship with Hans Kniep after a tour of European scientific institutions which took him to Berlin where he moved in 1928. At this time, the German biologist was dedicated to the study of the history of the development of mushrooms, trying to shed light on the life cycle and sexual behaviour of hymenomycetes (Mägdefrau 1979, 2013, p. 215). Throughout 1928 and 1929, Quintanilha's research focussed on the sexual development in the mushroom genus *Coprinus* (Quintanilha, A. 9 June 1932, to the National Education Board, file 0454/3: document 48 Lisbon: Camões, I.P. Archives). At the same time, he attended the Biologische Bundesanstalt für Land- und Forstwirtschaft (Biological Reich Institute for Agriculture and Forestry) where he followed a theoretical course in plant pathology. In the summer holidays, he frequented the Biologische Anstalt Helgoland (Biological Institute Helgoland) where he took a course in marine algae under the direction of the botanist Friedrich Oltmanns, and he also attended the colloquia organised by the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Institut (KWI) für Biologie in which Kniep regularly participated with his students.

In Germany, he had access to relevant research literature and developed contacts with the most important researchers in his field from whom he learnt new techniques and methods that he applied in his own work. In 1930, after the death of Hans Kniep, Quintanilha moved to the KWI für Biologie where he concluded the experimental part of his work. There he had the opportunity to establish relations with other researchers such as Otto Mangold, Hans Stubbe, Curt Stern, Friedrich Brieger and Erwin Baur, the "most notable German biologists of the time" (Fernandes 1975, p. 15), as well as with Richard Goldschmidt and Carl Correns. He became acquainted with "a vast field of research" of which "he knew almost nothing" (*Idem*). He also participated in the meetings of the Deutsche Botanische Gesellschaft (German Society for Plant Sciences) of which he was a member and where "the most varied and interesting chapters of modern biology" (Quintanilha, A. 26 Mars 1930, to the President of the National Board of Education [Report], Fundo AQ-Pasta (19)-QUI (APS)-2. Coimbra: Botany Digital Library-Botany Department of the Faculty of Science and Technology of the University of Coimbra) were discussed, and where he sought to understand how botany was taught in Germany. Since being established in 1912, the KWI für Biologie had become one of the most important research centres at the time in the field of biology (Deichmann 1995; Gausemeier 2009, 2010). During the 1920s, one of the main areas of biological research developed there concerned genetic inheritance and the development of sexual differences. Carl Correns studied this in relation to botany, Kniep to algae and mushrooms, Hartmann to algae and Goldschmidt to butterflies. Quintanilha

suggested to JEN that they invite Alfred Kühn along with Fritz von Wettstein to Portugal (Minutes of the 36th Session of the Executive Committee of the National Education Board, 25 April 1931, 2313/3/11. Lisbon: Camões, I.P. Archives). Besides Kühn, Quintanilha was also very much influenced by the work of Goldschmidt (Quintanilha 1951, p. XI), a notable German geneticist, who in the late 1930s studied biological inheritance and the determination of sexual characteristics in the gypsy moth (*Lymantria dispar*) and who developed an alternative to the gene theory of the Thomas Morgan school (Satzinger 2009, p. 147).

The scientists at the KWI attracted researchers from all over Germany and abroad. Interdisciplinary co-operation was a hallmark of their work, leading an employee of the Rockefeller Foundation to comment that there was no other country in Europe where chemists, embryologists and geneticists collaborated like they did in Germany (Rheinberger 2000, p. 550).

The Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gesellschaft (Kaiser Wilhelm Society) made a point of advertising itself to foreign scientists in order to attract them. In Coimbra, the Portuguese had been able to consult Adolf von Harnack's *Handbuch der Kaiser Wilhelm-Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Wissenschaften* in the German Institute since 1928. This "information guide to the works and life" sought to demonstrate the "greatness of the German effort in the field of the sciences" and the "merits and vitality" of this "great academic corporation" (*Boletim Do Instituto Alemão* 1928; Delille 2003). The German Institute, founded in 1925, thus became an important centre of information about German science. Added to this were the conferences held in the university as well as the role of the former scholarship holders and interns who had been to Germany and who constituted an important "multiplying factor" of German influence.

His stay in Germany allowed Quintanilha to learn "a considerable number of technical methods" that would be impossible to learn in Portugal. He discovered new techniques "in the genetics of basidiomycetes" and widened his "scientific horizons" "extraordinarily" (Quintanilha 1975a, p. 194). According to M. Gago, Quintanilha however avoided talk of "genetics" or "Mendelian" in the reports sent to the National Board of Education due to the "anti-Mendelian positions" of the "Portuguese biomedical community" (Gago 2009, p. 54).

In the summer of 1931, he returned to Coimbra where he adopted new orientations for the theoretical practical courses at the university. He set up a laboratory and a library and taught the medical botany and plant morphology courses. At the same time, he continued research begun in Germany that would form the basis of his work about sexual development in mushrooms, "the first original work on genetics" to appear in Portugal (Quintanilha 1975a, p. 194).

Quintanilha's internship in Germany thus helped to establish genetics in Portugal. This coincided with the introduction of the subject for the first time in the curricula of Portuguese biology course in 1929. The board of the faculty of sciences of the University of Coimbra recognised "the increasing importance of genetics" (Archer 1992, p. 1029; Gago 2009, p. 58). The



new discipline was first taught by Eusébio Tamagni and Abílio Fernandes, and when Quintanilha returned from Germany, he took over the teaching of genetics (Gago 2009, p. 60). In 1929, Erwin Baur could be found in the Botanical Institute of the University of Coimbra where he gave a lecture on “the Problem of Evolution in the light of New Research”, later published (Baur 1931), and where he also made contact with several professors from the university.

### **The school of Aurélio Quintanilha and the links to Germany**

Quintanilha's importance was not restricted to his own work. He set up a research school at Coimbra, producing disciples who continued to develop his line of research (Gago 2009, pp. 52–62).

His first disciple was Abílio Fernandes, who introduced cytogenetics in Portugal (Quintanilha 1975a, p. 193). Another was Flávio Resende, who had been in Germany on a scholarship from the Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung where he first did an internship at the Pflanzenphysiologisches Institut with Emil Heitz, whose works on plant cytology and especially on *Drosophila* were of immense importance for genetics. Resende was in Germany between 1934 and 1941 where he devoted himself to research in the area of plant cytology and genetics. In February 1937, he concluded his doctorate at the University of Hamburg (Resende, A. 28 November 1937, to the National Board of Education, file 0528/14: Lisbon: Camões, I.P. Archives). In 1938, he moved to the KWI für Biologie where he stayed until 1941. In 1943, he was appointed a full professor at the faculty of sciences of the University of Lisbon.

From Germany, he brought back important and innovative knowledge in the field of plant cytology, for example concerning the behaviour of cells in the division process of SAT-chromosomes and heterochromatin, a concept that Heitz had introduced and that Resende worked on in his doctoral thesis. Resende's links to German science continued after he returned to Portugal and they survived the closure of the KWI für Biologie and its replacement by the Max-Planck-Institut für Biologie.

It was also at the suggestion of Aurélio Quintanilha that Alberto Xavier da Cunha Marques, an assistant in the department of zoology in Lisbon, went to Germany in the 1930s. There he interned in the Zoologisches Institut in Berlin under the direction of Richard Hesse and Alfred Kühn. It was Kühn, an influential physiologist and geneticist, who introduced him to the study of “a hereditary-physiological-evolutionary problem” (Marques, A. 12 Mai 1932, to the National Board of Education, file 0400/: document 470. Lisbon: Camões, I.P. Archives). Kühn proposed that Marques carry out work on the “embryology of the sex glands” of the *Ephesia kuehniella* (Mediterranean flour moth) and that he start with an “attempt to produce mutations by X-rays, by treating the sex glands in the different development stages” since, in his opinion, the problem of mutations was “one of the

most exciting problems in experimental biology” (Marques, A., no date, to the National Board of Education [Report], file 0400/18: document 470. Lisbon: Camões, I.P. Archives).

Alberto da Cunha Marques gained his doctorate in 1935 with a thesis based on research he had done in Germany into the action of a pleiotropic gene in the Mediterranean flour moth, and in 1942, he published a new work on this species of moth, which was a favourite object of study among researchers in genetics and developmental physiology. Marques remained in touch with Kühn even after his return to Coimbra in October 1933. Some years later, he translated into Portuguese the zoology textbook Kühn had published in 1922 (Kühn 1964). The work he had done in Germany on genetics and cytology could not, however, be continued in Coimbra owing to the lack of technical facilities there.

### **José Antunes Serra, Eusébio Tamagnini and the unsuccessful attempt to introduce racial biology**

Another of Quintanilha’s disciples was José Antunes Serra (cf. Gago 2009, 2015; Quintanilha 1975b, p. 38) who was introduced to genetics while a medical student and later moved to the department of zoology and anthropology. By that time, Quintanilha had been forced to retire from the university for political reasons.

In 1938, Serra began publishing in anthropology; after the war (1949), he would publish the “first treatise on genetics written in Portuguese” (Quintanilha 1975a, p. 195). Genetics applied to animal improvement was introduced with Serra’s doctoral thesis which dealt with the inheritance of pigmentation in rabbit hair and in human hair (Archer 1992, pp. 1028–1029). He was influenced by German genetics through two intermediaries, first Quintanilha and then Eusébio Tamagnini.

Serra’s mentor Tamagnini had not studied in Germany but was nevertheless deeply influenced by German science, illustrating that transnational spaces are not only physical but also mental (Tyrrell 2009, p. 468). He had close contacts with German colleagues and was nominated as a corresponding member of the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gesellschaft by Eugen Fischer, whom he met on at least two occasions. The first was in Copenhagen in 1938 (Beau, A. 21 July 1938, to Richert [letter], Repositur 217, Nr. 78, fl.72. Berlin: Secret State Archives Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation), at the International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences where Tamagnini presented his research on blood groups (Fleure 1938). There he would have had the opportunity to witness a polemical exchange between Fischer and Melville Herskovits about the Franz Boas study about “Culture and Race”, which reflected the growing opposition to Nazi racial policy (Schmuhl 2008, pp. 212–213). Tamagnini had also met Fischer in the previous year, on the occasion of the fourth centenary of the University of Coimbra when the latter was awarded the degree of Doctor *honoris causa*. In the



diplomatic correspondence between the German Legation in Lisbon and the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tamagnini was described as a conservative Catholic and a friend of the Germans, who had even considered inviting him to attend the Reichsparteitag in Nuremberg (Hasenöhr, 2 June 1938, to the German Foreign Ministry, File Lissabon 46. Berlin: Political Archive of the German Foreign Ministry). He had been one of the founders of the national-syndicalist movement in Coimbra, but quickly broke with its leader Rolão Preto to become part of the *Estado Novo*. He was “rewarded” with the position of Minister for Public Education, a position he occupied from 23 October 1934 to 18 January 1936 (Torgal 2009, pp. 511–512). The Nazi diplomats in Lisbon were naturally delighted with the appointment of someone so close to Germany (“Die am 23. Oktober 1934 neuernannten portugiesischen Minister” [Report], 26 October 1934, German Foreign Ministry (GFM) 33/358, L 054556–054557. Kew: The National Archives).

It was Quintanilha and Tamagnini who introduced Serra to the question of genetics and physical anthropology which would mark his academic path for a long time. As Serra said in his curriculum vitae, he devoted himself to anthropology “of a comparative-racial nature” using statistical methods. This was true of his work on pelvimetry, published in 1938, which concerned the size of the pelvic bone cavity of the Portuguese, a topic on which his supervisor Tamagnini had already worked (1933).

Serra used the collection of skeletons in the Anthropology Museum and Laboratory employing conventional anthropometry methods. He also carried out comparisons of measurements and indices from a racial perspective, using among other things data compiled in *Grundriss der menschlichen Erblichkeitslehre und Rassenhygiene* (Outline of Human Genetics and Racial Hygiene) by Erwin Baur, Eugen Fischer and Fritz Lenz (1921). He endeavoured to prove that the average width of the pelvis among the Portuguese lay within the standard value calculated for Europeans and was not close to the value for “negroes”, “Malays” or “(Aboriginal) Australians” (Serra 1938, p. 31). This led him to conclude that “the Portuguese are close to the rest of the European series on all measurements and indices and, on the contrary, differ on various diameters from negro or mongoloid races” (Serra 1938, p. 112). He claimed that the Portuguese population was homogenous, although some crossings could be detected, primarily with the “Mediterranean” and also the “Nordic” races (Serra 1938, p. 116).

The racial question was high on the scientific agenda in Europe and the United States and the small Portuguese academic community followed suit. Tamagnini was one of the staunchest Portuguese supporters of racial biology. At conferences and in journal articles, he argued that foreign researchers who claimed that the Portuguese did not belong to the “white races”, considering them to be “negroid mestizos”, were wrong. On several occasions, Tamagnini came out in defence of the “high moral and political interests of the Portuguese Nation” to prove that such claims were false and had no scientific basis (Tamagnini 1944, p. 7). The influence of these ideas on José Antunes Serra’s thesis is obvious.

In the 1930s and 1940s, physical anthropology at Coimbra began to follow the direction taken in other countries (cf. Santos 1996, 2005). Whereas before it had been practised mainly by physicians, now researchers trained in biology started to appear. As both Tamagnini and Serra acknowledged in a conference, mere descriptions of morphology and the measuring of bones were being replaced by the comparison of data from various populations and the study of the “heredity of human traits” (Tamagnini and Serra 1940, p. 13). In Coimbra, a register of the families living in the municipality was compiled and the Sociedade Portuguesa de Estudos Eugénicos (Portuguese Society for Eugenic Studies) was created. Tamagnini had an important role in the foundation of the society, whose main goals were to promote eugenics in general and the creation of an Institute of Eugenics in particular (Cleminson 2011, 2014, 2016).

Fascist Portugal was susceptible to the promises of eugenics or racial biology to “improve” the population. The Salazar dictatorship was deeply nationalist and colonialist and also aspired to the creation of a “New Man” through nationalist education in schools and regime organisations, such as the Mocidade Portuguesa (Portuguese Youth) or the Fundação Nacional para a Alegria no Trabalho (National Foundation for Joy at Work), inspired by Nazi and fascist models.

Tamagnini was one of the greatest enthusiasts of this political trend, which he interpreted from a biological perspective. He followed the transformation from physical anthropology to eugenics by keeping up with the international literature in the area<sup>1</sup> and predicted “practical applications of great value” that would be “the basis for social reforms essential for a better life”. Both he and Serra advocated “an expansion of the possibilities of anthropology” (Tamagnini and Serra 1940, p. 18), not least through improved conditions for the Institute of Anthropology:

These studies should of necessity be treated with all possible objectivity and they require possibilities in respect of staff and organisation that today are not possessed except to a limited degree, so that some of these works in which the Institute of Anthropology of Coimbra is interested can only very slowly be carried out.

(Tamagnini and Serra 1940, p. 13)

As we have seen, some Portuguese academics continued to stay in touch with German scientists who were doing research in this area. Tamagnini knew the work of Fischer, Lenz, Baur and Verschuer very well and considered that Fischer’s book *Die Rehobother Bastards* was a “remarkable treatise on heredity” (Tamagnini 1944, p. 6). This rapprochement began already during the Weimar Republic and continued during the Nazi period.

In the opening speech at the 12th International Congress of Zoology in 1935, Tamagnini, now Minister of Public Education, spoke in front of all the participants, the President of the Republic and several diplomats about



the political importance of biology. He mentioned the “increasingly animated struggle between the defenders holding the torch of Western civilisation and the bold leaders of corrupting internationalism” and he claimed there were no objections, from the scientific point of view, to the racial hygiene measures being taken in Germany:

I would only like to underline, with regard to social economics, the great progress that has been made in the field of experimental genetics and its impact on the laws that regulate hereditary phenomena. The social consequences that the recently acquired knowledge in this field have given rise to can be perfectly appreciated from the heated controversy that their application in the case of Man has raised. Independently of the reasons we can put forward against certain measures taken in some countries to defend the hygiene of the race, what we can state is that, from a scientific point of view, there are no objections to them. The need to cleanse and to enhance the value of the nation's mass, in the biological sense, has for a long time been recognised by all. It is thus essential that we educate the will of our young pupils so that they take a stance in this sense.

(XII Congr s International de Zoologie ... 1936, p. 153)

Serra knew that these were controversial issues, which is what led him to oddly justify the use he made of the concept of “race” and to distance himself from the research work that was being carried out in Nazi Germany:

When I refer, throughout this work, to “race,” with no further specification, I do so in the strictly biological sense, that is, in the sense of a set of individuals who differ from others in at least one factor or gene. The other notions of race, the geographical and taxonomic and the purely speculative, so often used today, especially by German authors, do not interest me at this time.

(Serra 1939, p. 5, footnote 2)

Nonetheless, Serra, Tamagnini and other academics argued that the Portuguese belonged near the top of the racial hierarchy. In doing so, they made use of German race biological arguments but modified them according to their own nationalist agenda (Santos 2005). They praised the nation's colonial past, claiming that it had not led to “racial degeneration”. At the same time, they repeatedly cautioned that “man cannot be submitted, like other organisms, to the rigorous criteria of experimentation” (Trabalhosdo 1.   Congresso-Nacional de Antropologia Colonial 1934, p. 46).

The concerns of Tamagnini and the “anthropological school of Coimbra” were ephemeral and never managed to move beyond the public-health and population-policy debates typical of Portuguese eugenics (Matos 2010). Only in plants and animals was it possible to do laboratory experiments

with a view to improving them (Gago 2009, p. 67). Experiments with human beings, such as those conducted in Nazi Germany, were out of the question, especially due to the role of the Catholic Church.

As we have seen, cytogenetics was the first area of studies in the field of genetics to be developed in Portugal with the Quintanilha school. Pigmentation was one of the main forms by which to classify the different breeds and was studied primarily in small mammals such as the rabbit. Among the scientists who were working on this issue were Nachtsheim, Schulz, Engelmeier and Daneel, all of whose work Serra knew very well. Serra wanted to better understand “phenogenesis” (physiological genetics), a concept that he got from Fischer, who had also worked on rabbits (Gago 2015, pp. 7–8).

Although Serra had wanted to work with Hans Nachtsheim at the Institute for Genetics at the Agricultural University of Berlin (Report, no date, file 0863/13 – Instituto de Antropologia da Universidade de Coimbra, doc. 7. Lisbon: Camões, I.P. Archives), he never actually did an internship in Germany. He was however deeply influenced by German science and maintained personal contact with the German scientist. It was for example Nachtsheim who sent him the rabbit skins he used for his thesis. His work has been described as representative of the “German style” of genetics (Gago 2015). Both his work on pelvic measurements (Serra 1938) and his doctoral thesis (Serra 1939) were favourably reviewed in important German journals, the *Anthropologisches Anzeiger* and the *Chemisches Zentralblatt*.

### **Coimbra and criminal biology**

The Coimbra faculty of law also sought to follow the German example, driven on by José Beleza dos Santos whose main objective was to introduce “criminal biology” as a scientific discipline. To this end, Beleza dos Santos sent scholarship holders to specialise in law and criminal biology at research centres in Germany, primarily in Munich, with Franz Exner and Edmund Mezger who were carrying out research of an anthropological-racial nature. German relations were cultivated within the Coimbra faculty of law also by Luís Cabral de Moncada. The closeness to Germany was also noticeable in the *Boletim* that the institution published (Torgal 1999), in which the majority of the books reviewed were German. In this publication, Moncada also wrote about National Socialist legislation and the project for a new German civil code. Besides, the Faculty also received various German journals<sup>2</sup> and propaganda works about Nazi Germany.

Beleza dos Santos had already been to Germany on several occasions. In 1934, he went there, as a member of the Portuguese penal reform commission, to study the German prison system. In Berlin, he attended the 11th International Penal and Penitentiary Congress in 1935, which was headed by Erwin Bumke, the last president of the *Reichsgericht* (Supreme Court), and at which Minister of Justice Franz Gürtner and Joseph Goebbels both addressed the participants. After the congress, Beleza dos Santos and the



other members of the Portuguese mission (including Cottinelli Telmo) travelled through the Reich where they could – as Beleza dos Santos wrote – enjoy “the spirit of organisation and the scientific culture of the German people” (Santos 1936, p. 10). They visited the Deutsches Museum in Munich and other exhibitions, and they attended concerts, described as manifestations “of the high culture and musical genius of these people” (Beleza 1936, p. 10). In 1938, he attended the 6th meeting of the Nationalsozialistischer Rechtswahrerbund (National Socialist Association of Legal Professionals) in Leipzig. In 1941, Beleza dos Santos, Cabral de Moncada, Carlos Moreira and Manuel Gonçalves Cavaleiro Ferreira participated in the International Jurist Conference in Berlin where the International Law Chamber was founded (Torgal 2009, p. 513).

One of the scholarship holders sent to study in Germany by Beleza dos Santos was Eduardo Henriques da Silva Correia, who would become a full professor in Coimbra and later Minister of Education and Culture as well as Minister of Justice. Correia specialized in criminal law. In 1941, Beleza dos Santos recommended him to Edmund Mezger, who held the chair in criminal law in Munich and was a member of the Akademie für deutsches Recht (Academy for German Law), an institute founded in 1933 on the initiative of Hans Frank.

Correia spent a year in Germany as an Alexander von Humboldt Fellow and later received a scholarship from the Institute for High Culture. In Munich, he attended lectures on criminal law and psychology by Mezger as well as Oswald Bumke. However, his interests quickly evolved and led him to criminal biology, a new science developed in Germany during the Weimar years. In a report sent to the Institute for High Culture, he wrote that he was especially interested in the genotype and phenotype theory and the “twin method”, which, in his opinion, was especially important for criminology as a way to determine the importance of environmental factors and genetic predispositions for the criminal’s personality. In Munich, he made use of data collected at the “central record office” (*Sammelstelle*) for criminal-biology, as did most criminal-biological researchers in Germany. This record office was created by the Bavarian Ministry of Justice in 1923 and gathered reports prepared in different prisons based on criminal-biological examinations.

## Final remarks

The Portuguese academic community was strongly influenced by German science. Scholars sent to Germany were described as particularly brilliant; one of their tasks was to bring “the two friendly nations closer together” (Report, 15 August 1937, file 1207/18 – Instituto Ibero-Americano de Berlim, document 23. Lisbon: Camões Institute Archive). The academic careers of some of these scholars reveal how German influence was exerted indirectly, through the scientific literature, and directly through the internships they did in Germany or through contacts made at international congresses. As Sheila Weiss points out, German scientists often operated as

“scientific and cultural ambassadors” (Weiss 2005, p. 4), promoting a positive view of the Third Reich and its policies and sometimes of Nazi ideology; Portuguese colleagues were indeed subjected to such influences.

The institutes of the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gesellschaft, though considered apolitical, nevertheless participated in cultural propaganda when inviting researchers from abroad and encouraging German scientists to promote German interests in other countries. As a result, the dividing line that separated conferences with a scientific objective from those that had a political purpose vanished completely (Weiss 2005, p. 18). The promotion of German science, that maintained an international reputation for excellence also after 1933, hence became part of the National Socialist propaganda apparatus. Many Portuguese researchers were susceptible to the propaganda and acted as instruments to promote Germany’s interests and as a base to support its diplomacy. The research carried out on networks and interactions between different fascist regimes is – according to the German historian Arnd Bauerkämper – one of the most promising approaches when dealing with the transnational nature of fascism (2007, 2010; Bauerkämper and Rossoliński-Liebe 2017).

The admiration that these scholars felt for German science led some to accept, and even legitimate, some of the measures taken by the Nazi regime. And there were also political and ideological motivations. Portuguese scientists commonly subscribed to technocratic views and there were ideological affinities between the Portuguese and German regimes. Portuguese scientists assimilated, more or less critically, scientific as well as ideological views that were imparted to them in Germany and then disseminated them in Portugal.

## Acknowledgements

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## Notes

- 1 Among the German journals available were: *Der Erbarzt*, *Archiv für Anthropologie*, *Verhandlungen der Gesenschaft für Physische Anthropologie*, *Zeitschrift für Morphologie und Anthropologie*, *Volk und Rasse*, *Zeitschrift zür Rassenkunde*, *Zeitschrift zür Rassenphysiologie*, and *Archiv für Rassen und Gesellschaft-Biologie* (cf. Cascais 2014, pp. 166–170).
- 2 *Europäische Revue*, *Zeitschrift der Akademie für Deutsches Recht*, *Ibero-Amerikanisches Archiv*, *Monatsschrift für Kriminal biologie und Strafrechtsreform*, *Zeitschrift der Akademie für Deutsches Recht*.

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## 12 German foreign cultural policy and higher education in Brazil, 1933–1942

*André Felipe Cândido da Silva*

The objective of this chapter is to analyse German foreign cultural policy directed toward Brazil through initiatives involving higher education (especially those involving university professors), from the Nazi seizure of power in 1933 through 1942, when Brazil entered Second World War on the Allied side. I will focus on the cases of the Universidade de São Paulo (USP) and the Escola Paulista de Medicina (EPM). My goal is to show how the intense development of higher education in Brazil during this period created possibilities for Germany to invest in foreign cultural policy, alongside other European countries and the United States. However, attempts to capitalise on academic relations in favour of cultural policy came up against a series of obstacles, particularly the effects and contradictions of the persecution of Jewish scholars and the “polycratic” nature of the Nazi regime, which was notable in the case of foreign cultural policy for involving several state and party agencies (Hausmann 2001, 2005; Zarifi 2007; Ninhos 2010).

When the Nazis took power in 1933, Brazil was governed by Getúlio Vargas, who assumed the presidency of the country in 1930 after a revolution. In 1934, after pressure to hold elections, Vargas was elected president. Just before the end of his term in November 1937, he seized power in a coup d’état, establishing an authoritarian regime that lasted until 1945. This period from 1930 to 1945 is known as the Vargas Era, and is associated with profound transformations in Brazil’s political, economic and social structure involving the strengthening of a centralised state, industrial development, urban growth, regulation of labour rights and social assistance policies. (For a critical evaluation of Vargas’ regime, see Hentschke 2006.) It was also a period of intense development for higher education and research institutions, with the creation of the first universities in the full sense of the term; the institutions which existed prior to this time simply brought together pre-existing professional schools (Schwartzman 1979).

The historiography of the Vargas Era highlights the closeness between Brazil and Nazi Germany, especially in commerce, with the signing of mutual trade agreements, but also in the field of military co-operation and anti-communist policy (Gambini 1977; Hilton 1977a, 1983; Seitenfus 1980, 1985, 1988; Rahmeier 2009). Some authors have also addressed the activities



of the NSDAP in Brazil, with its form of organisation, strategies for action, political relations with the Vargas government and other political segments, and especially with the large community of German citizens and descendants who lived in the country (Gertz 1987; Bartelt 1991; Magalhães 1998; Cohen 1999; Moraes 2005; Dietrich 2007a, 2007b). This historiography essentially does not address the foreign cultural policy investments in Brazil aside from those related to the German colonies, which were meant to maintain the characteristics of “Germanness”, strengthen the relationship with the “motherland”, and disseminate National Socialist ideology.

Academic and scientific exchange as a foreign cultural policy activity is hardly mentioned in this literature. Brazil represents an interesting scenario for studies in this area, since it is located outside the European continent, which was privileged by Nazi ambitions of military, political, economic and also cultural dominance, and was well explored by the international historiography with regard to Nazi cultural policy before and during the Second World War (Hausmann 2001; Zarifi 2007; Janué Miret 2008, 2016; Ninhos 2010; Ninhos and Clara 2014; Clara and Ninhos 2016). The strategies of Nazi cultural policy in Brazil are less well-known. To what extent can this country, which was on the periphery of Hitler’s domination policy, help us understand the attempt by Nazi cultural policy to instrumentalise academic exchanges? I intend to show the density of the relations between Brazil and Germany in the academic field and its “intricate set of objects that include social, cultural or scientific events and personal networks along with scientific theories, disciplines, technologies or methodologies” (Clara 2016, p. 4).

### **German–Brazilian scientific relations after 1933**

During the Weimar Republic, Brazil (like other Latin American countries) became the target of systematic activities of German foreign cultural policy (Rinke 1996). A number of German scholars came to the country with direct or indirect support from the Cultural Department of the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Relations, and several Brazilians visited Germany (Silva 2011, 2013a; Muñoz 2015). There was also a fostering of exchange for students, publications, and scientific co-operation agreements between institutions, and official and semi-official organisations for promoting cultural relations were created. In 1922, the Sociedade dos Amigos da Alemanha (Society of Friends of Germany) was created, followed in 1930 by the Instituto Teuto-Brasileiro de Alta Cultura (ITB, Teuto-Brazilian Institute for Higher Culture), which was comparable to a similarly named institution founded by the French in 1922. French cultural diplomacy was in fact the main antagonist of the German initiatives, but at the same time it served as inspiration (Silva 2011). The ITB was connected to the German legation and the University of Rio de Janeiro. Its purpose was to “encourage and maintain intellectual exchange between German, Austrian, and Brazilian professors entrusted with special courses” (Instituto Teuto-Brasileiro de Alta Cultura 1930).

In the same year that the ITB was founded, the Instituto Ibero-Americano (IIA) emerged in Berlin, and took on the role of coordinating cultural relations in different fields of knowledge with Latin American countries. After the Nazis seized power in 1933, the IIA began to centralise foreign cultural policy for the region (Liehr *et al.* 2003), with close ties to and tensions resulting from propaganda activities; this characteristic was not exclusive to the regime's relations with the subcontinent, but was a structural factor of its foreign cultural policy in general terms (Zarifi 2007). General Wilhelm Faupel, the Reich's representative to Franco's Spain from February to September 1937 who had a history of relations with Latin American countries, was responsible for coordinating the cultural relations fostered by the IIA. Relations with Brazil fell under the purview of the IIA (Liehr *et al.* 2003).

Generally speaking, significant changes were not initially seen in foreign cultural policy when the Nazis ascended to power. As Haussman states (2005, p. 217): "At the time of the NSDAP's seizure of power there was no unified Nazi concept of academic policy in place, nor was there a clear plan for a systematic foreign cultural policy". Until 1937, the same cultural policy structures and institutions established during the Weimar Republic continued to be used (Zarifi 2007, pp. 203–204). In a 1937 speech in Nuremberg, Hitler called attention to the need for Germany to engage in active cultural policy like the British and French. Gradually, the distinction between "cultural policy" and "cultural propaganda", which had been emphasised greatly during the Weimar Republic, gave way to a mixture of these two domains (Hausmann 2001, 2005; Zarifi 2007). This caused divisions within the German Foreign Office, but also disputes with other agencies of Nazi rule. Besides the Ministry of Propaganda, cultural policy dimensions were claimed as a field of activity for the Reich Ministry of Science and Education and the Foreign Organisation of the NSDAP. According to Maria Zarifi (2007, p. 206), "those differences were developed in the following years into power ambitions, reflecting the profound antagonisms between the Party and the State, and the chaotic bureaucracy brought about by this dynamic". In the case of Brazil, conflicts between the traditional sectors of German diplomacy and NSDAP were present not only in the area of culture, but in all policies aimed at the country (Seitenfus 1985).

One of the focuses of tension within the framework of cultural relations was the Pró-Arte Society, which promoted music courses and art exhibitions and also supported German researchers who passed through Brazil. Founded in 1931 by the art merchant Theodor Heuberger (Lacombe 2008), Pró-Arte gathered artists, intellectuals and friends of the arts who were interested in promoting high culture (Lacombe 2008). With the Nazi seizure of power, the Pró-Arte Society and its founder became targets of distrust from the German embassy in Rio de Janeiro, which led to a series of conflicts (German Ambassador to Brazil 18 May 1937, to German Foreign Office [Report], Akte 65799. Berlin: Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts (PAAA)). Gradually, the artistic tendencies of Heuberger and other



members of Pró-Arte, which were close to the modernist vanguards, had to adapt to the guidelines of the Nazi ideology. This can clearly be seen in the pages of *Intercâmbio*, a magazine published by Pró-Arte from 1935 to 1941, which began to print news and images of Hitler and other leaders and activities undertaken by Nazi Germany, along with enthusiastic reports of its close ties to the Vargas government (Lacombe 2008).

Pró-Arte supported scientific initiatives such as expeditions by naturalists and ethnographers who travelled throughout Brazil during the Third Reich. Heuberger mediated contact between German scientists and Brazilian authorities to make their programmes of studies possible, as he did with Professor Hans Krieg of Munich in 1937, who he hosted and planned an intense schedule for his visit to the institutions in Rio de Janeiro (Sá and Silva 2016).

A report by Heuberger's partner in Pró-Arte, the pianist Maria Amélia Rezende Martins, acknowledges that the German art dealer was strongly pressured to join the NSDAP. When Brazil entered the war in 1942, Pró-Arte fell victim to the intense persecution of Axis citizens and institutions: in a long article in a Rio de Janeiro newspaper, the association was accused of being a Nazi cell funded by German agencies and intended to denationalise Brazilian culture (Lacombe 2008).

The ITB was another point of conflict for German cultural policy, in this case with the NSDAP Foreign Organisation. The organisation proposed to extend the institute's activities, restyle its organisational chart, and increase its flow of resources; it also expressed disagreement with its director, the dean of the University of Rio de Janeiro, who the organisation accused of passivity, recommending that the institute be as independent as possible from Pró-Arte (NSDAP's Foreign Organization 28 February 1935, to German Foreign Office [Report], Akte 65698. PAAA). In this way, the already precarious organisation of foreign cultural policy put into action by the existing cultural agencies became even more complex, with the involvement of other actors dedicated to more clearly subjecting them to the ideals of the Nazi regime.

### **The German cultural foreign policy and the first Brazilian university**

One of the transformations seen during the Vargas Era was the effort to modernise education. Until then, scientific activities predominantly took place in medical and agricultural institutes, in addition to natural history museums and medical and engineering faculties. The first university as an integrated institution, the USP, was founded in 1934.

In 1931, the Vargas government implemented broad reforms in higher education. Notwithstanding the centralising and authoritarian posture of the Vargas regime, there was no consensus on the models and guidelines for university education in Brazil. Despite negative repercussions abroad from the Nazi persecution and expulsion of Jewish professors, Germany maintained its strong tradition of science and teaching in its universities,

technical schools, academies, laboratories and research institutes. The country consequently represented a model and inspiration for a number of intellectuals involved in the debate around reforming and creating institutes of higher education. For the Germans, this opened enormous possibilities for action in terms of cultural politics, since during the Nazi regime, the circulation of academics and students remained a privileged strategy to divulge the scientific and cultural accomplishments of the “New Germany” and gain influence among the foreign elites (Ninhos 2010; Impekoven 2013).

There were various initiatives to observe and analyse the institutional patterns adopted in Germany in order to adapt them to Brazilian institutions. For example, in October 1934, the schools of dentistry and pharmacy which had linked themselves to the USP requested the official curriculum for German superior schools from the consulate in São Paulo (German Consul in São Paulo 15 October 1934, to German Foreign Office [Letter], Akte 65577. PAAA). In September 1936, the researcher Walter Oswaldo Cruz requested materials on organisation and curricula from the Superior Technical School of Berlin, which he justified by stating that it would be used to establish a similar institution in Rio de Janeiro (Reich and Prussian Ministry of Science, Education and Culture 16 October 1936, to German Foreign Office [Letter], Akte 63965. PAAA). Mauricio Joppert da Silva, a teacher at the Rio de Janeiro Polytechnic School, visited Germany in 1936 with similar intentions, as did the engineer and geographer Victor Ribeiro Leuzinger (Brazilian Embassy 4 September 1936, to German Foreign Office [Letter]; German Embassy Rio de Janeiro 20 January 1937, to German Foreign Office [Letter], Akte 65670. PAAA). The botanist Ari Fernandes, of the Botanical Garden of Rio de Janeiro, requested the organisational profiles for the German oceanographic institutes from the ITB, and stated that he intended to follow this model in creating a similar institution in Brazil (German Embassy Rio de Janeiro 19 January 1938, to German Foreign Office [Letter], Akte 66586. PAAA).

The project to create USP, which was planned to be a centre to train new leaders capable of reaffirming the cultural and political hegemony of the state of São Paulo, was organised around a central pillar, which was the School of Philosophy, Science, and Letters. French, Italian and German professors were slated to be hired to teach at the university. The Germans would be granted the chairs of botany, zoology and chemistry, while the humanities would be granted to the French and physics and mathematics to the Italians. There was intense debate between the diplomats of these three countries, with each attempting to secure more representatives in the faculty. To this end, they offered a series of benefits such as paid holidays, payment of travel expenses and provision of books and equipment (Silva 2013b).

Despite the Germans’ interest in ensuring influence in this newly emerged centre by nominating as many professors as possible, they had to deal with the fact that three of the academics who were hired (Ernst Bresslau in



zoology, Felix Rawitscher in botany and Heinrich Rheinboldt in chemistry) were of Jewish ancestry. Their hiring was suggested by the microbiologist and pathologist Henrique da Rocha Lima, who worked from 1909 to 1927 at the Institute for Maritime and Tropical Diseases in Hamburg, and since 1933 had led the Instituto Biológico de São Paulo. As a fiery Germanophile with close ties to German academics, Rocha Lima intended to foster the German presence in Brazilian academia (Silva 2011). Although he was sympathetic to Nazi Germany, he did not seem to share the regime's anti-Semitism. On the contrary, he attempted to take advantage of the Nazi "bloodletting" among qualified academics in order to propel Brazilian scientific development by attracting renowned experts.

The German professors hired by USP sought out the German Foreign Office in an attempt to obtain the same contractual benefits the French and Italians had obtained from their respective governments. But for the officials at Wilhelmstrasse (where the German chancery was located), Bresslau and his colleagues could not be considered authentic representatives of Germany since they were Jews; they might even act contrary to German interests. But there was no consensus on this point: for the German consul in São Paulo, it was better to ignore the ancestry of these professors and take advantage of the opportunity to have them at USP to gain influence for German culture and neutralise those of France, Italy and the United States. Although he considered the fact that the German representatives were not "Aryans" to be "very regrettable", the consul argued that they could still act in favour of German interests (Ficker, M. 16 October 1935, to German Consul in São Paulo [Letter], Akte 66586, German Consul in São Paulo 16 October 1934, to German Foreign Office [Letter], Akte 65577. PAAA).

The zoology professor Ernst Bresslau, who was the main scholar engaged in obtaining benefits from the German government, died a year after moving to São Paulo. His succession once again mobilised diplomats and officials of the Nazi Party, who were anxious to ensure that the chair would not fall into the hands of a non-German. The prominent name among these candidates was the Jew Ernst Marcus, which intrigued and irritated the German consul, who was interested to learn which networks were driving the suggestion of names, since the list only included teachers of Jewish origin (German Consul in São Paulo 11 January 1935, to German Foreign Office [Letter], Akte 65577. PAAA). Despite opposition from the officials in the Foreign Organisation of the Nazi Party, Marcus was hired and came to Brazil in 1935, where he lived until his death in 1968 (NSDAP's Foreign Organization 28 February 1936, to German Foreign Office, Akte 61171. PAAA). In addition to the professors of the USP, six researchers of Jewish origins were welcomed into the Instituto Butantã, a renowned medical research centre in the fields of serum therapy, bacteriology and immunology. The sources clearly show the great efforts officers of the NSDAP Foreign Organisation made to keep abreast of the negotiations around the nominations, and an attempt to take over decision-making, although it should be

noted that this responsibility fell to the German Foreign Office together with the Ministry of Education and Science.

This presence of Jewish scholars within the institutions in São Paulo perturbed some of the sectors involved in moving closer to German science, and was considered a deterrent to effective cultural policy. Consequently, new actors and proposals appeared when a foreign professor was hired for a medical school in São Paulo. These circumstances were substantially different from the ones surrounding the USP professors.

### **Walter Büngeler and the role of medicine in German foreign cultural policy**

A new opportunity to gain influence in the expanding Brazilian academic universe emerged with the creation of the EPM in 1933, a year before the creation of USP. In 1936, the school's director, Octavio de Carvalho (who had been trained in Germany and was notoriously pro-German) was looking to hire a professor of anatomical pathology. New actors were attempting to neutralise Rocha Lima's influence in hiring academics, since he appeared to be actively recruiting Jewish teachers and researchers. One was the hygienist Martin Ficker, who since 1926 had led a microbiological research station in São Paulo which was linked to the Kaiser Wilhelm Society, another connection through which the traditional scientific organisation sought to promote German cultural and scientific relationships with the outside world.

Unlike Rocha Lima, who was his student in Germany, Ficker was a staunch anti-Semite. He complained that "we already have a sufficient supply of non-Aryans" (Ficker, M. 26 December 1935, to the German Consul in São Paulo [Letter], Akte 65577. PAAA) and warned of the danger of this group prevailing among Germany's representatives in the academic world. The name proposed for the chair of anatomic pathology was Walter Büngeler, who worked in Danzig. Unlike the group hired earlier by USP, Büngeler took up his new post with a series of benefits obtained after lengthy negotiations between the director of the medical school and Wilhelmstrasse officials: salary bonuses, paid holidays in Germany, moving costs, the maintenance of his original job post in Danzig, and the possibility of performing additional work. (The entire negotiation involving Büngeler, the Wilhelmstrasse officials, the Ministry of Education and Science, Brazilian diplomats, the director of the EPM, and Martin Ficker is documented in Akte 63965. PAAA.) As a result, his earnings totalled twice the amount the USP professors received (Carvalho, O. 2 June 1936, to Ministry Macedo Soares [Letter], Akte 63965. PAAA). This investment was seen to be wise, as Büngeler became one of the main connections for German/Brazilian interchange from his hiring until 1942, when Brazil's entry into the Second World War prompted his return to Germany. Büngeler's performance reveals one of the most dynamic facets of scientific relations between the



two countries and the German foreign cultural policy: exchanges in the medical field.

Medicine was the most dynamic field of exchanges between Brazil and Germany since the last quarter of the 19th century. After this time, Germany further established the university model of teaching and research in medicine that would become the basis of contemporary medical training. German university towns became a Mecca for students and teachers of medicine from around the world, including Latin America, as well as for patients interested in treatments. This international reputation made German medicine an attractive tool for foreign cultural policy. During the Weimar Republic, physicians and medical students were among the main supporters and “clients” of cultural policy activities aimed at Brazil (Silva 2013a). This continued during the Third Reich, but became more systematic with the 1935 creation of the *Academia Médica Germano-Ibero-Americana* (AMG) which was created as a division of the Ibero-American Institute in Berlin.

The academy was founded by the aforementioned general Wilhelm Faupel, along with Berlin governor Julius Lippert and the famous surgeon Ferdinand Sauerbruch of Hospital Charité. The main purpose of the academy was to promote and coordinate relations between Germany and Latin American countries in the field of medicine in order to guarantee the influence of German medical science among teachers and students in the region, through visits to the Reich and opportunities for study and research at German institutions (Reggiani 2005).

The academy did not award scholarships, although they eventually tried to obtain them from the Humboldt-Stiftung or the *Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst* (German Academic Exchange Service). The AMG worked in close co-operation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Propaganda, the Ministry of Interior, and the Ministry of Education and Science. Other supporters were the Nazi Party and private agencies such as the Chamber of Commerce for South America, the *Reichsbahnzentrale für Deutschen Reiseverkehr* (National Headquarter for German Travel) and *IG-Farben*, which had an international network of branches mobilised to support initiatives promoting scientific exchange with Germany. (On the creation of AMG, its supporters, annual reports and relations with the Foreign Office, see Akte 65792. PAAA. See also Rep. 218A. Berlin: Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischen Kulturbesitz (GStA).)

To overcome the obstacle of language, the agency inventoried the doctors who had knowledge of Spanish and Portuguese. Within its statutes, the language issue became a key aspect, because it could attract not only those who already had a knowledge of German and sympathy for German culture, but also those which were more distanced. The use of French, on the other hand, was to be avoided as much as possible, since disputes between the two neighbouring countries extended to the cultural domain. The academy created a group of members called “senators” that included the more

active collaborators in Germany and major figures in the Latin American countries who were certain to be sympathetic to Germany, since they were not of Jewish descent and were prominent in the medical-scientific community and in local politics. Among Brazil's representatives was none other than Walter Büngeler.

The activities conducted by the AMG were, in broad terms, referral and support for students and teachers interested in visiting Germany. In 1936, a course was held in various medical specialties, with excursions to laboratories, university hospitals, pharmaceutical and medical manufacturers, and therapy centres. The courses and excursions, which were scheduled to take place alongside the Olympic Games, were offered in Portuguese and Spanish. This successful experience led to further editions in the following years until the war began. Brazilians were so prominent among the participants that some specific courses were organised for Brazilians, with classes and seminars held in Portuguese. These "itinerant courses" which visited medical institutions in several cities also included receptions at the Brazilian embassy, the Ibero-American Institute and other official organs of the Nazi State located within the Reich's capital, showing the complex blend of scientific, cultural and political aspects involving the AMG's activities and the cultural policy at that time.

Approximately two hundred doctors and students from Brazil were welcomed and advised by the academy between 1936 and 1939 (see the archives of German Iberoamerican Medical Academy, Rep. 218A, GStA). The diplomatic tensions between Germany and Brazil in 1938, which were the result of Vargas' nationalisation policy and the prohibition of the NSDAP (Rahmeier 2009), did not stop Brazilians from significant participation in the academy's activities. Besides the courses for students and professors, the academy promoted official missions by Brazilians linked to the government, educational and medical spheres who were interested in observing the German medical and public health systems. One commission of twenty-five Brazilian professors of medicine visited Germany that same year (N. 15, Rep. 218A, GStA). A major "itinerant congress" organised in Portuguese had thirty-eight Brazilian participants. This group was led by two renowned Brazilian physicians: University of Rio de Janeiro professor Agenor Porto, and Heitor Annes Dias (N. 15, Rep. 218A, GStA). Dias was a professor at the same university, but was also a federal deputy until 1937, when the Vargas dictatorship dissolved the Congress. He drew special attention from the AMG for his position as Vargas' personal doctor.

In 1939, Vargas' oldest son, the physician Lutero Vargas, visited Germany to conduct studies on artistic anatomy and surgery. The reputed professor of anatomy, Siegfried Mollier, received Lutero Vargas and arranged his route through the German institutions. Mollier wrote: "Several visits and tours are planned in a way that we expect to fascinate Mr. Vargas in some weeks by what Germany will offer to him". And added: "I believe that we will provoke with the German artistic anatomy an impression on Mr Vargas



bigger than anything similar he has met in France” (Mollier, S. 31 March 1939, to German Iberoamerican Medical Academy [Letter], N. 16, Rep. 218A. GStA Rep 218).

Lutero Vargas stayed in Berlin until war was declared. Because his visit took place at a time when the diplomatic representations to the two countries were vacant, this move was interpreted by the German Chancellery as a sign of the Brazilian dictator’s willingness to restore diplomatic relations (Rahmeier 2009, p. 217, on Lutero Varga’s stay in Germany, see Bericht über den Deutschlandaufenthalt des Herrn Dr. Med. Lutero Vargas, N.17, Rep. 218A. GStA). This is a good example of how scientific relations oriented by foreign cultural policy “operate at complex level where the scientific, the cultural and the political are often closely intertwined” (Clara 2016, p. 4).

The AMG organised visits by many Brazilians interested in exploring various aspects of public health in the Third Reich or its system of social assistance, labour organisation or public agencies. The chief of the clinic at the EPM, Otacílio Gualberto de Oliveira, travelled in 1936 to Berlin with support from the official German institutions to visit the venereal diseases prophylaxis service in the German capital (Brazilian Legation 17 December 1935, to German Foreign Office [Letter]; State Councillor of Capital Berlin 3 January 1936, to German Foreign Office [Letter], Akte 65670. PAAA). The government of São Paulo sent the physician Carlos de Moraes Barros on an official visit to Germany in October 1936 to become familiar with the organisation of the German health and assistance system (Brazilian Embassy 9 October 1936, to German Foreign Office [Letter]; President of Reich Health Office 14 October 1936, to Oster (German Foreign Office) [Letter], Akte 65670. PAAA). The Ministry of Labour in 1936 sent an official mission directed by the physician Coryntho Silva to research healthcare systems and social medicine in Germany. Some Brazilians were interested in political organisations such as the Hitlerjugend or the Deutsche Arbeitsfront (German Labour Front). The reorganisation of the Brazilian army’s medical service led some officers to Europe to observe similar structures, as Carlos Eugênio Guimarães who went in 1934 to England. The Germans intervened to attract Guimarães to Nazi Germany, and were aided in this effort by Brazilian military figures who considered the German model more suitable for their medical service. German authorities consequently arranged for a military medical mission to Germany led by general Leite de Castro in 1934, which was supported by German companies such as Seifert & Co and Siemens (Gradenwitz, W. 10 March 1934, to Mühlens, P. [Letter]; Mühlens, P. 14 March 1934, to Health and Social Welfare Authority [Letter]; Reich Ministry of Defense 19 March 1934, to German Foreign Office [Letter], Akte 63965. PAAA).

Important figures of Brazilian medicine who visited Germany received special attention from the AMG, especially those who were recognised as “friends of Germany”. In this case, the academy worked closely with the

Cultural Department of the German Foreign Office and the Reich Ministry for Education. IG-Farben also was part of the programming for the visitors, which included a stay in Leverkusen, where the firm's headquarters were located. This network of institutions also sought to grant awards and honours to the visitors or assure their presence at politically important events such as the annual NSDAP meeting. Between 1937 and 1938, Rocha Lima spent six months visiting research institutions in various cities. He was received with honours worthy of a head of state, and his itinerary was carefully drafted and executed. It included attending the annual NSDAP meeting in Nuremberg, which he considered the highlight of his journey (German Embassy Rio de Janeiro 1 June 1937, to German Foreign Office [Letter]; Reich and Prussian Minister of the Interior 10 August 1937, to German Iberoamerican Medical Academy [Letter], Akte 65670. PAAA). In 1938, Rocha Lima was awarded the Order of the German Eagle for his long-standing contributions to Germany.

Despite his proximity to Rocha Lima, Büngeler expressed reservations about the researcher in his reports to Wilhelmstrasse because of his role in appointing "non-Aryan" German scholars to Brazilian institutions. Besides the three German professors he nominated for USP, Rocha Lima attracted Jewish researchers to the Biological Institute that he directed. For this reason, Büngeler considered in his reports to the German diplomats that Rocha Lima was a "friend of Jews", more than a "friend of Germany" (Walter Büngeler 9 November 1936, to German Foreign Office [Report], Akte 61171. PAAA). But apparently, the German official agencies never questioned Rocha Lima's loyalty to Nazi Germany.

For Büngeler, the strong presence of Jews in Brazilian academics complicated the realisation of an effective cultural policy through science (Walter Büngeler 9 November 1936, to German Foreign Office [Report], Akte 61171. PAAA). As a senator of the AMG, he ensured that the EPM participated substantially in excursions and courses in Germany. He also attempted to promote exchanges of assistants and hire two other German professors for the medical school, one in pharmacology and the other in hygiene, always warning against contracting "non-Aryans" or individuals with "suspect" political tendencies. He also tried to facilitate a visit to Brazil by two notable German doctors, the pathologist Ludwig Aschoff and Franz Volhard (Aschoff, L. 31 October 1937, to Speiser, H. (German Consul in São Paulo), Akte 67880, Büngeler, W. 2 February 1937, to Fricke (Reich Ministry for Culture), Akte 61171. PAAA). The pathologist thought that cultural work required greater support from the German state, like France and Italy provided their representatives with specialised literature, working tools and travel funding. Büngeler worked to promote German cultural policy through medicine in co-operation with the leader of the NSDAP in Brazil, Hans Henning von Cossel, who joined the German representatives in Rio de Janeiro as a cultural attaché after the party was banned by the Vargas government (Dietrich 2007a).



It is important to mention that visits German doctors made to Brazil were extremely important for foreign cultural policy, and in many cases, were the subject of extensive coverage by the local press. Among the many visitors, we can mention Ludolph Brauer, Walter Benthim, Herfarth, Karl Wedell, Franz Keysser, Heinrich Huebschmann, Vorfelder, Heidelberg's surgeon Martin Kirschner, the cardiologist Karl Fahrenkamp, and Hans Holfelder and Gottfried Boehm, experts in radiology and radiotherapy. (On Gottfried Boehm's travel: Medical Faculty of Porto Alegre 26 October 1933, to Gottfried Boehm [Letter], Akte 67880; on Brauer's travel: German Consulate 31 October 1934, to German Foreign Office [Report], Akte 66586; on Keysser's visit: German Foreign Office 16 March 1940, to South-American German Embassies, Akte 65577; on Fahrenkamp's travel: German Legation 29 November 1933, to German Foreign Office [Letter], Akte 61134; on Huebschman's travel: German Consul in Porto Alegre 19 November 1938, to German Foreign Office [Report], Akte 65576. PAAA.) Major emphasis was placed on the visits by tuberculosis experts Helmuth Ulrici and Walter Unverricht (Reich and Prussian Ministry of Science, Education and Culture 3 October 1938, to German Foreign Office [Letter], Akte 65576. PAAA). The Führer's friend, Franz Volhard, was also received with honours in São Paulo and in the Brazilian capital (German Consul in São Paulo September 1938, to German Foreign Office [Letter], Akte 65576. PAAA).

Some of these visitors included trips to German colonies on their itineraries. For example, Brauer visited the distant colony of Presidente Bernardes in São Paulo state, where there was a very active cell of the NSDAP. Conflicts can be seen between the diplomatic network and party authorities in some of these visits; for example, the authorities opposed Franz Volhard's trip to Brazil and other South American countries, but were unable to stop it from taking place (Reich Ministry of Science, Education and Culture 30 September 1938, to German Foreign Office [Letter], Akte 65576. PAAA). The NSDAP attempted to control the circulation of academics within Brazil, demanding that everyone who visited the country report to local representatives. In some cases, party officials protested non-compliance with this requirement, while the diplomats argued that such a measure was not required. At the same time, however, they emphasised that all German visitors should pass through the official diplomatic missions. NSDAP also suggested profiles for academics to visit Brazil and other South American countries, for example suggesting a philosopher of law be sent to explain the new German constitution from its philosophical foundations and world view (NSDAP's Foreign Organization 18 March 1938, to German Foreign Office. [Letter], Akte 65575. PAAA).

Impressions sent back to Berlin from Brazil regarding the effects of these visits by German academics were dissonant. For example, the consulate in São Paulo reported that the visit by Ulrici and Unverricht had not made a good impression, while the embassy in Rio considered their activities very

successful and impactful (German Consul of São Paulo 27 April 1938, to German Foreign Office, Akte 65575. PAAA).

With Brazil's entry into the Second World War in 1942, the medical-scientific exchange of the last years curtailed severely. Intense persecution of Axis citizens was implemented by Vargas' political police, which did little to differentiate the simple fact of being German from subversive activities. Researchers participating in study activities were placed under suspicion, and in some cases, were imprisoned. As a result, only after the end of the war could the intense cultural exchange of prior years' resume once more, but on different foundations.

### **Final considerations**

To the scope of this chapter, it was not possible to more deeply explore the impact of this circulation of persons into individual trajectories and reputations, or the development of shared research programmes and institutions on both sides of the Atlantic. It is possible, however, to point out that through this transnational network built on the intersection between science, culture and politics, knowledge flowed, affecting the formation of disciplines and the consolidation of institutions, as well as the careers of many academics and students. Despite the markedly political dimension of the relationships established during Nazi rule, these contributed to an effective intellectual exchange to some extent. For example, it is interesting to note that the visits made by German academics to Brazil during the Third Reich brought about the development of research programmes in botany, chemistry, geology, mineralogy, ethnography and ecology.

The interests that moved many of these academics did not always pass directly through the political dimension. As Hafinger states (2016, pp. 58–59), “German scholars were interested in academic exchange with scholars from other countries for scientific [and] professional reasons”, and scholars from other countries were likewise motivated for the same reasons when they went to Germany. Even so, many knew that the lectures they gave abroad would take on political features from the agencies involved in the foreign cultural policy.

Although Nazi foreign cultural policy had the advantage of official and semi-official institutions involved in promoting German culture, in many cases, it was the capillary-like nature of networks like IG-Farben, the Lutheran Church, or previously established personal networks which ensured that some initiatives such as visits and teacher/student exchanges came to fruition.

It is notable that the cultural policy in Brazil via science faced a major obstacle in the Civil Service Restoration Act, since many of the scholars who visited or settled in the country were Jews who had been expelled from their posts. This provoked conflicts with the German Foreign Office, the



Nazi Party and with individuals who had acted as supports in the scientific relations between the two countries.

It is not easy to measure the concrete effects of the foreign cultural policy activities, since the sympathy they earned is not directly tangible. In the case of Brazil, we know that the efforts by German diplomacy on this and other fronts were not enough to ensure the country's neutrality in the war (which had been the case in Argentina). But in any case, they did help foster interest in the Third Reich among segments of the Brazilian elite, and they also maintained vigilance among the Americans, who were extremely concerned with Brazil's close proximity to the Germans. This anxiety, coupled with the calculated ambivalence of Getúlio Vargas, was important for him to negotiate a series of advantages with the United States. In addition to this impact, the actions to promote the "New Germany" through foreign cultural policy contributed to the transnational legitimisation of the Nazi regime. In the case of Brazil, they show that "the obsession to 'persuade' and to 'seduce'" among the fascist regimes (Clara 2016, p. 6) led them to try to extend their sphere of influence beyond Europe. The intensely nationalistic environment of the period imposed certain constraints on transnational scientific exchange, and this was also the case in Brazil when scientific expedition programmes across the country were obliged to deal with government restrictions. Nevertheless, an intense flow of people, objects, projects and technologies between Brazil and Germany thrived.

Solid scientific relations, some of which we have seen in this chapter, helped dismantle the image of international isolation of German science during the Third Reich. The circuits involving the flow of scholars in universities, institutes and laboratories were, as stated by Clara (2016, p. 13), "the most important channels that kept international communication flowing for Germany and invaluable tools 'to make a friend out of an enemy'". But the effects did not always correspond with expectations, since the polycratic nature of the Nazi regime and the impact of the persecution of the Jews imposed ruptures, dilemmas and tensions, making Brazilian–German scientific relations during the Nazi era complex and multifaceted.

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# 13 The politics of “neutral” science

## Swiss geneticists and their relations with Nazi Germany

*Pascal Germann*

Until the late 1920s, genetics was a marginal phenomenon in Switzerland. It was not institutionalized at any university and hardly had any specialized proponents. Starting in the mid-1930s, however, it experienced a remarkable boom. In 1935, a geneticist for the first time received the prestigious Marcel Benoist Prize, often referred to as the “Swiss Nobel Prize” (Stuber and Kraut 1995); during the next four years, a number of geneticists were appointed to professorial chairs in biology at Swiss universities; and in 1941, biologists, medical scientists and anthropologists founded the Swiss Society for Genetics, a national science association that would play a major role in the further institutionalization of genetics in Switzerland. Finally, only two years later, in 1943, Switzerland’s first association for human genetics was created with the founding of the Commission for Human Heredity (Germann 2016).

The upsurge of genetics in Switzerland occurred at a time of political polarization within the genetics community at the international level. The basic reason for the erupting differences derived from developments in Germany, where genetic science and National Socialist policies entered into an unprecedented symbiotic relationship (Schmuhl 2008; Weiss 2010). On the one hand, genetic researchers received an enormous amount of state support and political attention. On the other hand, many researchers worked to a great extent on their own initiative toward the regime’s goals, from scientifically elaborating racial hygiene laws to actively supporting the Nazi racial war after 1939. German genetic researchers and their collaboration with the Nazi regime increasingly encountered severe criticism above all from US-American, British and Scandinavian geneticists, who viewed themselves as reform eugenicists (Kevles 1985; Roll-Hansen 2010; Köhl 2013). They pursued the goal of internationally isolating scientists aligned with the Nazi regime. At the same time, National Socialist authorities attached great importance to the international reputation of German genetic science, because they used it as an instrument of foreign policy in order to promote acceptance abroad of the Nazi racial state. In her study on the history of human genetics under National Socialism, Sheila Faith Weiss (2010, p. 301) even concludes that “the international renommée of the German scientists was perhaps their most valuable resource for the Nazi state”.



Against this background, the question regarding the relationships between Swiss genetics and racial-hygienically focussed research in Nazi Germany becomes politically volatile. How did the genetics community in Switzerland position itself in the international scientific arena? What relationships did Swiss geneticists cultivate with German research? What connections existed between developments in Germany and the spectacular upswing of genetics in Switzerland?

The studies by the “Independent Commission of Experts Switzerland – Second World War” (2002), in particular, have rigorously investigated the relationships between Switzerland and Nazi Germany. However, the focus in this respect has been on *economic* and *political* linkages, whereas relationships in the *scientific* sphere have remained largely unexplored. Hence, the narratives emerging after the war by which Swiss scientists legitimized their disciplines have hardly been critically assessed. With regard to the history of genetics, a surprisingly tenacious dissociative narrative has been established. In this view, Swiss geneticists succeeded in maintaining an apolitical and “neutral” science that increasingly dissociated itself from the politically biased genetics of Nazi Germany (Klein 1967/1968; Oehler 1969). This dissociative narrative is also reflected (in modified form) in the new historical literature on Swiss eugenics. Notably the Basel research group led by Regina Wecker has argued for emancipating the history of eugenics from its one-sided focus on National Socialism, using the example of Switzerland to convincingly show how eugenic patterns of thought and action could also take shape under democratic circumstances and often in distinction from coercive measures by the state (Wecker *et al.* 2009). Although legitimate, such a perspective has resulted in overemphasizing the distance from National Socialist eugenics. Thus, while Hans-Jakob Ritter (2009), for example, maps out the close connections between Swiss human genetics and eugenics, he also argues that Swiss scientists had increasingly turned away from German research. Starting from the end of the 1930s – according to Ritter – “German science was considered politically corrupt due to its proximity to the racial policies of the Nazi state” (p. 195). According to these assessments, the upsurge of genetic research in Switzerland occurred in conjunction with a clear distancing from German genetics and racial hygiene.

My own research based on previously unused sources in Swiss and German archives does not support such an interpretation. Instead, much evidence points toward a different interrelationship, which I will elucidate in the following. It shows that genetics in Switzerland advanced not so much in opposition to German racial hygiene but rather through a lively exchange and in partial alliance with the latter. This does not mean that Swiss geneticists openly appeared as National Socialist sympathizers. Rather, key actors and institutions in Swiss genetics successfully managed to present their activities as an expression of a purely scientific and neutral position. The idea of “neutral science”, which referred back to both the ideal of objectivity and Swiss self-perception, thus formed a helpful instrument to conceal the political dimensions of co-operative scientific relationships.

Traditionally, the concept of neutrality suggested an abstention that prohibited intervention and partisanship. Especially in Switzerland, neutrality has often been celebrated as a principle of self-restraint that enabled a Swiss “Sonderweg”. In contrast, newer historical research has highlighted how neutral positions did not so much have an encapsulating effect but rather opened up scope for action, enabled international positioning and facilitated cross-border collaborations (Speich-Chassé 2012; Tanner 2015; Eichenberger *et al.* 2017). Especially for smaller states like Switzerland, neutrality offered “backdoors to power”, as has been detailed by Madeleine Herren (2000); in particular, it has been shown with regard to Scandinavian states how neutral self-images served as capital to achieve more power and influence within international science (Lettevall *et al.* 2012). My following explications, too, stress the productivity and strategic utilization of the neutrality concept. For Swiss geneticists, neutrality formed an essential resource for advantageously positioning themselves within the international community and entering into diverse collaborations.

In the following, I would like to map out how various forms of co-operation between Swiss geneticists and racial hygienists in Nazi Germany emerged. In so doing, I will concentrate on the University of Zurich, which in the first half of the 20th century distinguished itself as a leading centre of genetic research in Switzerland. This dominant role was due, in particular, to the financially powerful Julius Klaus-Stiftung founded in Zurich in 1921, which pursued eugenic objectives and generously financed genetic research. Zurich geneticists subsequently dominated not only the newly founded national scientific associations but also the Swiss delegations at international congresses. Playing an important role in the upsurge of genetic research in Switzerland were medical doctors who researched human heredity. The first section looks into these pioneers of human genetics in Switzerland and their connections with German racial hygiene. The second section, focussing on biologically trained geneticists, illuminates the founding of the Swiss Society of Genetics in the international context.

### **Co-operative relationships: the emergence of human genetics in Switzerland and the foreign science policy of Nazi Germany**

The enormous upsurge experienced by Swiss human genetics in the 1930s occurred in no small part due to a transnational context. Namely, Hitler’s seizure of power also changed the conditions under which research into human heredity developed in Switzerland. For Swiss human geneticists, the immense support that eugenically relevant research now received in Nazi Germany opened up new opportunities to engage in transnational collaborations and achieve scientific distinction. They published in hereditary-biological and racial-hygienic journals newly established during National Socialism, gave lectures at congresses held in Germany, exchanged educational material with their German peers, and visited human genetic institutes that had become prestigious and well-equipped due to the regime’s support.



In turn, the National Socialists strove to achieve an international leadership position and role model function for Germany in eugenics and genetics. Genetics researchers loyal to the regime were therefore dependent upon sympathetic co-operative partners within the international research community. They accordingly showed an obvious interest in collaborating with Swiss human genetics. Taking shape against this background were the co-operative relationships that will be elucidated in the following. In so doing, I focus on two medical doctors who undeniably counted among the most important figures in early human genetics in Switzerland: Otto Nägeli and his student Ernst Hanhart.

Otto Nägeli played a central role in the promotion of human genetic research at the University of Zurich (Ernst 1941). As director of the medical clinic in Zurich and as an internationally renowned haematologist, he used his influence to anchor the study of genetics in research and teaching. Even today, one of Switzerland's most important science prizes, the Otto Nägeli Prize, is awarded in his honour. It seems to have been forgotten that during the 1930s, Nägeli advocated a decidedly pro-German position. The Zurich physician not only strove to closely link human genetic research in Switzerland to Germany. As the following example shows, Nägeli also allowed himself to be enlisted in supporting Nazi Germany's foreign policy goals in the field of racial hygiene.

After the German Sterilization Law – Gesetz zur Verhütung erbkranken Nachwuchses – entered into force in Nazi Germany on 1 January 1934, various physicians and psychiatrists in Switzerland commented on the scientific foundations of racial hygiene and on the question of the legitimacy of forced sterilization. Right from the outset, National Socialist authorities were very much concerned about international acceptance and the scientific legitimation of the law. For this reason, the debate in Switzerland was closely monitored and critical voices were painstakingly noted. In 1935, the *Schweizerische Medizinische Wochenschrift* (Swiss Medical Weekly) published an article by the Austrian physician Julius Bauer (1935) entitled “Dangerous Buzzwords from the Field of Hereditary Biology”, in which he sharply criticized German racial hygiene.

The German human geneticist and racial hygienist Otmar von Verschuer subsequently turned to his colleague Otto Nägeli.

I would like to inform you about the incident, since I know how you yourself are positioned on the matter and regarding the persons involved. I am convinced that you will represent our point of view to the Swiss colleagues when the opportunity arises.

(Verschuer, O. 5 September 1935, to Nägeli, O., AMPG,  
3rd section, rep. A, no. 271)

Nägeli immediately moved to meet his German colleague's expectations, protesting in a letter written to the journal against the publication of Bauer's article:

The article by Julius Bauer is a wholly unscientific, purely political diatribe against Germany.... Eugenic sterilization is not a buzzword. In the year 1885, Forel already performed it in practice in Zurich. Since then it has been adopted by laws not only in America, Switzerland, but also in the Nordic states. The mixing of widely separate races like Europeans with Africans or Asians is proven to be scientifically disadvantageous by a series of careful investigations, in particular by Eugen Fischer.... I find it very regrettable that such a worthless, hateful article was accepted by the *Schweizerische Medizinische Wochenschrift*.

(Nägeli, O. undated, to Gigon, A., AMPG, 3rd section, rep. A, no. 271)

With this statement, Nägeli supported not only the legitimation strategy of the National Socialists, who often justified forced sterilization by referring to eugenic legislation and actions in other countries; rather, he also portrayed a core element of the National Socialist worldview – namely, the supposed harmfulness of race-mixing – as scientific fact. Verschuer thereupon thanked the renowned Zurich clinic director for his unequivocal support: “We Germans are thankful, dear Professor, to have in you such a warm friend in face of the attacks against us. That you managed to win over the Swiss medical profession is a nice achievement” (Verschuer, O. 25 September 1935, to Nägeli, O., AMPG, 3rd section, rep. A, no. 271). From the surviving correspondence, it is impossible to ascertain the reference of this last sentence. But in any event, a response to Bauer’s article written by the Basel pathologist Andreas Werthemann (1935) soon appeared in the *Schweizerische Medizinische Wochenschrift*, in which Werthemann defended the scientific foundations of the German forced-sterilization law and emphasized the major importance of methods in human genetics developed in Germany. The most important financial backer for genetic research in Switzerland, the Julius Klaus-Stiftung, also accommodated German interests by attempting to prevent criticism of German racial hygiene. Thus, for example, it tied the financing of a Swiss publication about the sterilization debate to the condition that there “is no polemicizing against the racial hygiene measures of foreign countries” (Protokolle der Vorstandssitzungen der Julius Klaus-Stiftung, 16 July 1937, AAIM).

Otto Nägeli’s letters to German racial hygienists also sometimes feature an aggressive anti-Semitism. Thus, he complained in vulgar and defamatory language about the supposed Jewish influence at Swiss universities and affirmed the view of his German colleagues that only “Jews” participated in the Swiss criticism of Nazi eugenics (Nägeli, O. 21 September 1935, to Rüdin, O., MPIP-HA, GDA 32). As a jointly shared “cultural code” (Volkov 1978), this anti-Semitism facilitated common understanding and communication with pro-regime scientists in Germany. However, it is remarkable that, in public, Nägeli justified his position in seemingly purely scientific terms. Thus, his comments in the aforementioned letter to the medical weekly were not



directly political; rather, he limited them to discrediting the critique of German racial hygiene as “unscientific” and politically motivated. These patterns of argument were typical for right-wing intellectuals and scientists during the Nazi period. By referring to scientific and political neutrality, they sought to portray generally pro-German positions as purely scientific stances. Sven Widmalm’s findings with regard to pro-German intellectuals in Sweden also apply to the corresponding circles in Switzerland. They used “neutrality [...] in order to define certain political standpoints as non-political” (Widmalm 2012, p. 82).

Of course, Nägeli’s decidedly pro-German views were not shared by all of his colleagues. Rather, among medical doctors, there were also voices critical of German racial hygiene (Ritter 2009, p. 229; Wecker 2012). Yet, with regard to careers, publication opportunities and research funding, incentives existed at the University of Zurich to avoid public criticism of German racial hygiene. This is shown not only by the example of the Julius Klaus-Stiftung, dominated by influential Zurich professors, but also by the university’s appointment policy. To be sure, the rectorate and cantonal government endeavoured to limit the influence of explicitly National Socialist circles at the university. But at the same time, policies consistently ensured that not a single Jewish scientist expelled from Germany obtained a position, although many and sometimes very renowned Jewish scientists applied for professorships. Files related to job appointments reveal that in this case, anti-Semitic resentment worked in conjunction with fears that Jewish scientists would criticize Nazi Germany (Germann 2016, pp. 232–236). Obviously, the University of Zurich strove to uphold the close relationships with Germany. This science policy context provided favourable preconditions for Swiss human geneticists to intensify their connections to the burgeoning genetic research in Germany, as is shown by the example of Ernst Hanhart.

Ernst Hanhart is considered the first medical scientist in Switzerland who fully specialized in human genetics (Prader 1974). Even though he never held a professorial chair, he gained a formidable scientific reputation both in Switzerland and internationally. The well-known ophthalmologist Adolphe Francescetti, who played a key role in the post-war institutionalization of human genetics, wrote in 1962: “It is thanks to the scientific accomplishments of Professor Hanhart that Swiss genetics enjoys such great international respect today” (Franceschetti, A. 12 July 1962, to Federal Council Tschudi, H.-P., CH-BAR#E9510.10#1987/32#558\*).

Ernst Hanhart earned his reputation above all from an ambitious research project that he began around 1920 and continued until the late 1960s. Hanhart and his assistants studied a multitude of alpine villages and communities that they described as “isolates”, collecting vast quantities of genealogical, demographic and medical data. From this data, Hanhart constructed immense genealogical trees, which he evaluated according to Mendelian methods in order to study the genetic transmission of numerous pathologies. At the same time, Hanhart conjoined his interests in genetic

findings with eugenic objectives. Thus, these population surveys also served to identify risk groups that were supposed to be kept under bio-political observation (Germann 2017).

While Hanhart's investigations hardly received any attention at first, starting in the 1930s, his research met with an increasingly keen response and his stature as a scientist grew significantly. An important reason for his enhanced reputation was that the Swiss researcher benefited from Nazi Germany's state-sponsored racial hygiene and heredity research. The Nazi seizure of power opened up a new space of resonance that he endeavoured to exploit. We can see this from his publishing activities, which he directed strongly toward Germany during the Nazi period. Prior to 1933, he had published only a single article in a non-Swiss periodical (publication list of Ernst Hanhart, UAZ, AB.1.0378). In contrast, between 1934 and 1939, he published at least twelve articles in German specialized journals, which also included key organs of Nazi racial hygiene, such as the journal *Der Erbarzt*. Other Swiss medical scientists such as Carl Brugger, Jakob Eugster, Otto Nägeli, Hans Rudolf Schinz and Manfred Bleuler also published articles in this journal, which was founded in 1934 and was conceived also as a practical aid for doctors to implement racial-hygienic measures in Germany (Der Erbarzt 1934–1944).

Hanhart's scientific involvement in Germany reached a highpoint in 1940, when, together with Günther Just and other German scientists, he published a five-volume work entitled *Handbuch der Erbbiologie des Menschen* (Just *et al.* 1940). The work was the first comprehensive compendium of human genetics. For German science, it doubtlessly constituted a prestige project that was supposed to highlight both the leading role and international character of German human genetics. Thus, Just (vol. 1, p. VI) emphasized in the introduction that "outstanding non-German researchers" had also collaborated on the project. Here he was referring above all to Swiss geneticists, who lent the work an international air. Of a total of nine non-German authors, no fewer than six were Swiss.

The close connections with Ernst Hanhart cultivated by German researchers were also supported by the political realm, as shown by the following example. In July 1936, the Dutch town of Scheveningen hosted the 12th conference of the International Federation of Eugenic Organizations. High-ranking advocates of German racial policy ascribed great importance to the conference for the international reputation of National Socialist eugenics (Kühl 2013, pp. 105–109; Weiss 2010, pp. 289–292). Ernst Hanhart spoke at the conference as well, reporting on his genetic surveys in the alpine valleys of Switzerland (Hanhart 1936). These German advocates were impressed by his presentation. In an internal report on the conference written for the Reich Interior Ministry, Hanhart's contribution was positively highlighted in particular:

General interest was aroused by the thorough pedigree demonstrations of Hanhart, Zurich, who warmly advocated the eugenic measures in



Germany and whose genealogical charts, compiled with endless effort and provided with medical diagnoses, can only be warmly recommended for imitation in Germany.

The report further found that such “systematic population surveys [are an] important precondition” for implementing racial-hygienic legislation in Germany (Bericht IFEO in Holland, MPIP-HA, GDA 37). Then in 1943, the Reich Interior Ministry also financed a research stay in Switzerland for Günther Just so that he could exchange ideas with geneticists and, in particular, familiarize himself first-hand with Ernst Hanhart’s research practices (Reichsminister für Wissenschaft, Erziehung und Volksbildung 23 May 1941, to Universitätskurator Greifswald, UAG, PA 229).

Nowhere does the archival material I have investigated contain any indication that Hanhart’s close connections with German racial hygiene invoked any criticism in Switzerland or negatively affected his academic advancement. When the Zurich government council awarded Ernst Hanhart with the title of professor in 1942, the explanatory statement highlighted as a positive factor his collaboration with German human geneticists:

Testifying to his [Hanhart’s] international reputation are his presentations at international scientific conferences and the fact that he was enlisted as co-publisher and editor of multiple chapters for the large reference book on hereditary biology undertaken for the first time by Prof. G. Just.

(Protokoll des Regierungsrates, 30 April 1942,  
UAZ, AB.1.0378)

The academic laurels Hanhart acquired in Nazi Germany evidently also benefited his scientific reputation in Switzerland.

These examples show how after 1933, Swiss human geneticists not only continued their relationships with German racial hygienists but often also intensified them. They profited from their close contacts with German researchers and institutes by using them as resources for their careers and scientific reputations. At the same time, their activities accommodated the foreign science policy ambitions of German racial hygiene and their eugenically relevant research met with interest among those authorities engaged in Nazi Germany with the implementation of racial hygienic measures. Compared to the notable protagonists of Swiss human genetics, plant and animal geneticists in Switzerland were not as heavily involved in the 1930s eugenics discussion (even though most of them by all means shared eugenic convictions) and political developments in Europe initially had less of a clear impact on their co-operative work. However, as a result of world political events, starting at the end of the 1930s political polarization increasingly affected the entire genetics community.

### **Genetics in war: the founding of the Swiss Society of Genetics in the international context**

On 6 September 1941, two years after the outbreak of the Second World War, around one hundred scientists and medical doctors gathered in Basel for the first annual meeting of the Swiss Society of Genetics, thereby laying the cornerstone for the further institutionalization of genetic research in Switzerland. The opening speaker, the plant geneticist Alfred Ernst (1941, pp. 618–619), deliberately left unresolved the question as to why the union was occurring “precisely under the current temporal circumstances”. But in retrospect, the situation seems clear. Narratives developed after the war interpret the founding of this scientific association in Switzerland as a commitment to an apolitical Swiss genetics that distanced itself from the politically corrupt science of Nazi Germany. Thus, for example, the geneticist Peter Beighton (1997, p. 79) writes:

The Swiss Society of Genetics [...] had the aim of encouraging genetic research for the sake of pure science, and not for political or racial considerations. This society was formed as a response to developments in the science of genetics in Nazi Germany.

Such a representation not only masks the political ambiguities that shaped the act of founding the national association of geneticists but also misconstrues the international context in which the union occurred. This international dimension can be illuminated through the activities and positioning of Alfred Ernst, who had largely initiated the association and served as its first president. As a former rector at the University of Zurich and founding member of the Julius Klaus-Stiftung, even prior to the founding of the society, Ernst had advanced to become the most influential geneticist in Switzerland with regard to research policy. In addition, Ernst also appeared as an organizer at the international level, officiating as the Swiss representative in the Permanent International Organizing Committee for Genetics Congresses, which consisted of only eleven members and was responsible for determining the time and place of international genetics congresses (Punnett 1941, pp. 5–6) – a task that in these extremely polarized times was politically explosive.

When in August 1939 the Seventh International Congress of Genetics took place in Edinburgh, involving the participation of a Swiss delegation of twelve geneticists, the holding of the next congress came under discussion already on the first day of the event. The German delegates and their allies, who given the large presence of American and British geneticists formed a minority, obviously sought to have the next congress held in a country sympathetic to them. Thus, the Italian delegate Alessandro Ghigi filed the motion in the organizing committee to have the next international geneticist



congress held in Rome in 1942 (Punnett 1941, p. 6). The Swedish, Norwegian, British and American delegates in the organization committee spoke out resolutely against the Italian suggestion. But Ghigi – who belonged to the openly racist geneticists in Italy (Cassata 2011, pp. 223–224) – found support from the Swiss committee member Alfred Ernst, who voted for holding the congress in Rome (Ernst, A. 26 October 1939, to Chiarugi, A., StAZH, U 920.15). For all intents and purposes, Ernst hereby supported the foreign science policy of the Axis powers.

However, no decision could be reached in Edinburgh because world political events made it impossible to proceed with the congress according to plan. After the conclusion of the Germany–Soviet Nonaggression Pact on 24 August 1939, the German scientists had to leave the congress due to a directive from the Foreign Office, and because of the acute threat of war, many additional continental European geneticists – including the Swiss delegation – likewise started on their journey home. The congress ultimately ended with a propagandistic defeat for the German racial hygienists. Since the German delegation had already departed, notable geneticists from Great Britain and the United States took the opportunity during the final days of the congress and shortly before the German attack on Poland to pass a manifesto decidedly directed against Nazi racial policy and eugenics (Roth 1999; Krementsov 2005, 2006; Kühl 2013, pp. 118–119).

The German scientists subsequently endeavoured to regain ground on international scientific terrain, especially since they faced the threat of complete isolation due to the outbreak of war. Thus, after the Edinburgh conference, many German geneticists established contact with Alfred Ernst. On the one hand, they appealed in terms of National Socialist war propaganda for an appreciation of the German position, in each case enclosing a speech by Hitler in their letters. On the other hand, they signalled their intention to continue good scientific relationships (several letters in 1939, to Ernst, A., StAZH, U 920.15). Ernst in each case responded favourably to the letters; although not expressing any political sympathies, he nonetheless intimated the willingness of Swiss geneticists to accommodate themselves to the new political circumstances: since the departure from Edinburgh, “we [the Swiss geneticists] are trying to come to terms with the conditions and changes in the world that are so difficult to understand” (Ernst, A. 25 October 1939, to Tschermak-Seysenegg, E., A.).

Regarding the organization of the next geneticist congress, Ernst continued to endorse the ambitions of the Axis powers. He was aware that the “proposals for the next congresses must proceed from the delegates of the neutral states represented in the international committee” (Ernst, A. 26 October 1939, to Sirks, M. J.). For this reason, he offered Alessandro Ghigi that he would use his position as a representative of a neutral state to lobby for holding the congress in Rome (Ernst, A. 26 October 1939, to Ghigi, A.). However, Ernst’s efforts to convince additional members of the international committee remained unsuccessful. In late November 1939, Ernst conceded

that one had to let “the congress issue rest at least until next year” (Ernst, A. 27 November, to Sirks, M. J.).

As Ernst’s efforts to distinguish himself as an organizer on the international terrain of genetics failed, he turned his attention to the national level. In 1940, when the Swiss population’s anxiety about a German invasion peaked and demands to adapt to the “new Europe” gained the attention of broad circles of the political elite, Ernst performed the essential preliminary work for founding a national association for genetics. His objective resonated widely among Swiss geneticists. Just after being founded, the society already numbered 175 members (Protokoll der 1. Jahresversammlung 1941, p. 607). At his opening speech for the first annual meeting on 5 September 1941, Ernst was eager to keep the association’s science policy position and relationship to German racial hygiene in limbo. Thus, he referred, on the one hand, to the Czech botanist Bohumil Němec, who on the occasion of the Mendel anniversary in 1922 had emphasized “the importance of Mendelian science for the reconciliation of peoples” and advocated tolerance with regard to “individual, national, and racial qualities” (Ernst 1941, p. 609). On the other hand, he cited the German botanist and racial hygienist Erwin Baur, who shortly before his death in 1933, had euphorically welcomed Hitler’s seizure of power: “Mendel’s discoveries” – according to the words of Baur, described by Ernst (p. 610) as “excellent” –

were not only path-breaking for theoretical research but have also become of fundamental importance for the practice of plant and animal breeding, for medical practitioners, for population policy, and for racial hygiene. Through this Mendel has become a benefactor for all of humanity.

As a result of the sequence of the two quotations, the ideal of scientific universalism that informed Ernst’s entire speech takes on an ambivalent meaning. It refers both to an appeal for a reconciliation of peoples, which in the context of 1941 can (but need not) be read as a critique of National Socialist racism, as well as to a eugenic vision that here refers to the whole of humanity but nonetheless explicitly ties into the tradition of German racial hygiene. The act of grounding the genetic society was marked by a strategically deployed ambiguity that could be read as critical of Germany but also as pro-German.

German scientists, in any case, reacted quite positively to the founding of the Swiss specialist association, in congratulatory letters expressing their delight at the founding of the “Swiss sister society” and highlighting how much German research, too, owed to Swiss geneticists (several letters in 1942, to Ernst, A., StAZH, U 920.15). Moreover, as president of the association, Alfred Ernst continued to count on close relationships with German research. For example, thanks to Ernst’s mediation, a Swiss junior scientist was able to conduct research visits to renowned German research institutes even during the war (letters between Ernst, A. and Wettstein, Fr. v., March 1943). Ernst’s relationships with German research frequently reached back



to old friendships that had already existed prior to the time of National Socialism. Ideological affinities nevertheless shine through in a few of his letters to German colleagues who were members of National Socialist organizations. Such is the case, for example, in a personal letter where he proudly reported that his “physically and mentally well-developed” children corresponded to an “ideal type of the Nordic race” (Ernst, A. 21 January 1943, to Renner, O.), and when he complained in a letter that genetics in Switzerland did not meet the same recognition as in Germany because “many prejudices and ideological differences” had a inhibiting effect, particularly when pertaining to “eugenic efforts” (Ernst, A., 21 January 1943, to Haase-Besell, G.).

While the friendly and scientific exchange with German geneticists continued, the Swiss genetics community simultaneously worked to position itself at the international level as a neutral actor in order to make a contribution to the “reestablishment of international relationships in the field of genetics”, as Ernst formulated in 1942 (Ernst, A. 9 March 1942, to Sirks, M. J., StAZH, U 920.15). This is exemplified by the attempt of members of the Swiss Society of Genetics to revive from Switzerland the information service of the International Committee on Human Heredity, which had been launched in the 1930s and arranged the exchange of publications and research material. In this case, Swiss researchers emphasized neutral Switzerland’s advantageous location (Staehelin, J. E., 5 February 1942, to Rüdin, E., MPIP-HA, GDA 47). Although German racial hygienists reacted with interest to the Swiss proposal, the project nonetheless bogged down. The attempt by Swiss geneticists to enter the game at the international level as neutral players was rendered obsolete by the now imminent victory of the Allies. In the fall of 1945 when multiple members of the Permanent International Organizing Committee for Genetics Congresses gathered in England to prepare for the eighth international congress in Stockholm, not only were there no geneticists from Germany and Italy but Switzerland was also no longer represented. Gathering instead were those geneticists who had already positioned themselves against National Socialism prior to the war (Bonnier and Larsson 1949, pp. 10–12). In this respect, the politics of neutral science proved unsuccessful. However, against the background of the looming Cold War, Swiss geneticists in the post-war period managed to reposition themselves on international terrain, once again as representatives of “neutral science” who now optimally networked with American and British researchers.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has shown how Swiss scientists cultivated close connections to racial hygiene and genetics in Nazi Germany, in the process entering into diverse co-operative relationships. The figures presented in the case studies differ with respect to their political motivations. Otto Nägeli’s co-operative stance was essentially based on his political sympathy for Nazi Germany. In

contrast, Alfred Ernst's statements do not indicate a pro-Nazi attitude and Ernst Hanhart's political sentiments are barely discernible from the sources. But the examples also specifically illustrate jointly shared intentions that met with broad acceptance within the genetics community in Switzerland. The close relationships between Swiss geneticists and German research were based on the willingness to view the new power relations in Germany and Europe as a space of new opportunities to be exploited in terms of research strategy and science policy. However, these academic relationships cannot simply be reduced to a matter of opportunism. Similarities with regard to scientific styles of thought and ideological affinities also played a role, as Nägeli's anti-Semitic attitude and Hanhart's and Ernst's racial-hygienic convictions illustrate. During the Second World War, the activities and positioning of the geneticists ultimately expressed a political stance that was typical for a substantial portion of the elite in Switzerland: it sought to come to an arrangement with the "new Europe", signalling goodwill towards German interests but without indicating any direct sympathies, in order to strategically keep all options open.

In summary, the examples presented here support the thesis that genetics in Switzerland and racial hygiene in Nazi Germany mutually benefited each other: they functioned – to adapt terminology from Mitchell G. Ash (2002) – as resources for each other. On the one hand, Swiss geneticists contributed to the acceptance of National Socialist policies on health and frequently assisted efforts to realize the science policy ambitions of Nazi Germany. On the other hand, Swiss human geneticists benefited from National Socialist support of heredity research. They exploited these new opportunities for academic advancement; and, in light of the enormous increase in demand for genetic knowledge resulting from the Nazi radicalization of racial hygiene in Germany, their research took on greater practical relevance and social resonance.

Thus, one can speak overall of a win-win situation. The notion of a "neutral science" formed an essential basis for this co-operative situation. On the one hand, this notion spoke to the universal ideal of scientific objectivity. On the other hand, it also referred to Switzerland's self-image as a small neutral state. This double neutrality allowed Swiss scientists to distinguish themselves as an independent voice of pure science. Indeed, Swiss genetic researchers, in particular, managed to sustain their reputation as neutral, conscientious and apolitical scientists. The international reputation of Swiss scientists also constituted an important resource for Nazi Germany's science policy. Thus, in the name of "neutral science", Swiss geneticists frequently undermined efforts to internationally isolate hereditary research in Nazi Germany. It is often claimed that a neutral attitude allowed Swiss science to preserve its independence and objectivity. But the history of Swiss genetics during the Nazi period rather suggests the opposite: it was precisely this neutral self-conception on the part of Swiss scientists that allowed them to cultivate close connections with German racial hygienists without thereby being disparaged as Nazi collaborators.



Even in science, neutrality proved to be a construct that could be flexibly deployed, making it possible to keep all options open with regard to strategies for research and academic politics. This also applied for the period after 1945. Neutrality narratives of the post-war period followed patterns of reinterpretation and repression. Memorializing literature now celebrated Switzerland as a neutral island of science that successfully asserted itself in a sea of politically corrupted research. Such narratives were especially helpful for Switzerland after 1945 in order to establish ties with a research community now dominated by the United States and Great Britain. Remembering a time of heroic self-assertion went hand-in-hand with a politically desirable amnesia with regard to darker chapters of the nation’s history. In any event, co-operative relationships with German racial hygiene could be successfully forgotten. To pick up on the title of this edited volume: neither Nägeli’s nor Hanhart’s or Ernst’s scientific activities were ever condemned as “treason”. Rather, they were seen to exemplify a Swiss science that successfully remained neutral and independent even in time of political polarization.

## Archives

Archive of the Anthropological Institute and Museum in Zurich (AAIM)

Archive of the Max-Planck-Gesellschaft (AMPG)

Archive of the University of Greifswald (UAG)

Archive of the University of Zurich (UAZ)

Max Planck Institute of Psychiatry – Historical Archives (MPIP-HA)

State Archives, Canton of Zurich (StAZH)

Swiss Federal Archives (CH-BAR)

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## 14 Contributing to the cultural “New Order”

How German intellectuals attributed a prominent place for the Spanish nation

*Marició Janué i Miret*

### **The usefulness of national stereotypes for cultural diplomacy**

During the Second World War, the propagandists of National Socialist Germany spread their project to establish a new political, social and economic organization of Europe which they called “New Order”. Two fundamental criteria determined the place each nation had to occupy in the power structure of the New Order. The first was race. At the top of the hierarchy were the Germans, followed by the citizens from Scandinavia, the Netherlands and Flanders, who were considered Germanic. At the bottom were Jews and Gypsies, who were facing annihilation. Just above them were Poles and Russians qualified as subhuman “*Untermenschen*”. The second decisive factor was political ascription. According to it, most foreign nations were divided into Axis and non-Axis aliens. Usually, the categorization and status of these other foreigners inside the Nazi racist scale was somewhat opportunistic and changed with time, i.e. depending on the political interest the Nazis had at each moment for each of the countries.

The battle of the National Socialists to achieve the hegemony of the New Order was also disputed intensively in the sphere of cultural diplomacy, i.e. of official or officially supported policies of cultural representation of the state abroad (about this concept, see Gienow-Hecht 2010; Gienow-Hecht and Donfried 2010a), which has been described as “soft power” (Martin 2016, pp. 2, 11, 267). Aspiring to a cultural New Order, the National Socialists proved to be aware that the specific type of prestige maintained by each field of culture (i.e. humanities, arts, social sciences) could not be subjugated, without effort, to political power, economic power or violence. On the other hand, the Germans could not carry out their European cultural project alone, they needed continental allies (Martin 2016, pp. 9–10). The most important ally of Nazi Germany was fascist Italy, but during the Second World War, Franco’s Spain also played a prominent role.

In the design of the cultural New Order, the Nazi regime relied on ultra-conservative nationalist German intellectuals who, after Germany’s defeat in the First World War, had intensified their connections with ideologically related cultural elites of other countries. These conservative scholars had



insisted on the superiority of the German vision of culture, the idea of a transcendent but nationally rooted *Kultur*, opposed to the superficial and uprooted “civilization” of France and Great Britain (Martin 2016, pp. 6–8, 267). In their opinion, German hegemony in the cultural New Order was dependent on the achievement of an international coalition in defence of national values. On the other hand, perceiving that the European civilization of the interwar years was in crisis, these intellectuals were concerned about the meaning and values of European identity. Faced with the threat to the global hegemony of Europe posed by new powers such as the United States and the USSR, which they conceived as committed to materialistic values, those Germans emphasized, together with other European intellectuals, the contributions of the continent’s distinctive culture to civilization. In accordance with these ideas, the cultural New Order combined the celebration of the values and achievements of the European high culture, with a vision of Europe as integrated by “pure” national traditions.

In the context of the battle for the hegemony of the cultural New Order, a large body of German academics and scholars – many of them renowned in the field of Hispanic studies (Bräutigam 1997) – became interested in defending the Spanish nation as the bearer of one of the “pure” cultures worthy to be integrated into the international coalition that would constitute the New Order. For this purpose, they examined the character of the Spanish nation and disseminated ideas about “*Hispanidad*”. These topics were developed in specialized monographs and in scientific papers and press articles. This chapter highlights and analyses some of them.

The authors considered here interpreted culture as the manifestation of the nation’s “being”, “soul”, “essence”, “character”, or “spirit” (*Volksgeist*). This culture, understood primarily as “national culture”, was associated with the moral value of the actions of the peoples, and with their destiny and mission in Europe and in the world. Their representations of the nation were based on cultural stereotypes – that is, on reduced images about the collective customs, traditions, character, tastes and capacities of its inhabitants (Reef 2000, pp. 205–207). As constructions and conventions, these attributes and stereotypes could be contradictory. They had elements of continuity, but also of change according to the circumstances and interests of their forgers and diffusers, and of the public, they addressed themselves to.

Representations of the Nation have been linked to political struggles and movements everywhere. Political discourses have contributed to the stabilization and diffusion of national stereotypes in order to influence public opinion in a particular historical conjuncture (Núñez 2005, pp. 23–26). France and Great Britain were the countries which most often offered perspectives on the Spanish nation and exported their conception of it to the world at large (Varela 2016b). The loss of Spain’s last colonies in the Spanish–American War – the “Disaster of 1898” – affected the way Spain was perceived internationally, reinforcing the image of decadence, material backwardness and anachronistic mentality (Núñez 2016).

In this chapter, I discuss the stereotypes that German intellectuals choose to characterize the Spanish nation, their attitude towards the different historical clichés of Spain (Varela 2016a) and their connection with the dictatorship of Franco and the regimes that preceded him. Moreover, I consider the Spanish and international points of reference of the authors examined, as well as their comments on other regions and nations. Likewise, I explain the frequent references to Europe and the way they conceived the cultural New Order of the continent. The aim is to gain a deeper understanding of the contribution of German intellectuals to the exploitation of national stereotypes in shaping the cultural diplomacy of National Socialist Germany.

### **German interest in Spanish culture in the interwar period**

Following its defeat in the First World War, Germany made Spain a primary target in its cultural diplomacy in view of the latter country's neutral stance during the conflict. This policy was intended to exercise a sophisticated "ripple" (Gliech 2003a) effect, influencing Spanish elites so that their decisions would be more aligned with German interests. Notwithstanding its socioeconomic backwardness, the Iberian nation afforded Germans with scope for showcasing their scientific and cultural capabilities on the European continent, evading the restrictions of the Treaty of Versailles (Janué 2007a, 2010). It also served as a bridge to enable the Germans to continue to exert their influence in Latin America.

There are several indications that German cultural policy towards the Hispanic nation intensified during the interwar period. Between 1917 and 1931, twelve German schools were set up in Spain in addition to the three operating up to then (Hera 2002, pp. 124–125); in 1923, the *Deutsche Wissenschaftliche Vermittlungsstelle* (German Centre for Exchange and Study) was set up in Barcelona and, two years later, the *Arbeitsstelle für Deutsch-Spanische Wissenschaftsbeziehungen* (Centre for Spanish–German Scholarly Exchange) in Madrid, both financially supported by the *Auswärtiges Amt* (German Foreign Office); and in 1931, the *Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst* (German Academic Exchange Service, DAAD), originally set up in 1925, opened a branch office in Madrid.

The institutionalization of German cultural diplomacy with respect to the Iberian nation envisaged both the broadening of German culture in Spain and the dissemination of Hispanic culture in Germany. In 1917, the *Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut Hamburg* (Ibero-American Institute Hamburg) was opened. In 1924, the *Görresgesellschaft* (Görres Society), the German scientific institute of Catholic orientation, set up a branch in Madrid and from 1928 onwards began publishing the *Spanische Forschungen der Görresgesellschaft*, one of the most prestigious German academic journals about Hispanic culture (Bräutigam 1997, pp. 109–111; Hera 2002, pp. 48–56). The *Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut* (Ibero-American Institute) was founded in Berlin in 1930 (Liehr, Maihold and Vollmer 2003). The next year saw the launch of the



Deutsch-Spanische Gesellschaft (German-Spanish Society), also in Berlin (Janué 2008a, 2008b). Several German academics and scholars specializing in Hispanic affairs were attached to these institutions and with this came the growth of German Hispanic studies (Briesemeister 2000; Juretschke 2001). Prominent German Hispanists from the period, such as Ernst Robert Curtius and Karl Vossler (Curtius 1926; Vossler 1930; Bräutigam 1997, pp. 23–48), and German social scientists, such as Alfred Rühl (Janué 2007b), theorized about the essence of Spanish culture and its meaning on the European stage.

The accession to power of the National Socialists caused friction in German–Spanish relations, as a consequence of the mutual aversion to the Spanish Second Republic that existed from 1931. As with the remaining German institutions, those associated with Spanish–German cultural relations witnessed the *Gleichschaltung*. In 1936, Wilhelm Faupel, a retired soldier who had already been Ibero-American Institute chairman since 1934, became German–Spanish Society chairman (Gliech 2003b). During these initial years with National Socialism in power, the works of German Hispanists covering the topic of the nature of the Spanish people and their culture incorporated three aspects: ties between Spanish culture and character and the advent of the republican regime; the incompatibility of the Republic with the nature of the Spanish nation; and the contrast between the Spanish republican political system and the Nazi political system.

The outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in the summer of 1936 gave new meaning to German–Spanish relations in the eyes of the National Socialist authorities (Janué 2015a, 2015b). According to the official German explanation, the primary object of the Spanish Civil War was to defeat communism, a fundamental mission of the Nazi regime in Europe (Bernecker 2002, pp. 161–165; Hera 2002, pp. 343–357). The key goal of Nazi foreign policy with respect to Spain became exerting an influence on the structuring of Francoist Spain. With this aim in mind, Nazi cultural diplomacy forged relations with Spanish academics and scholars who were supporters of the Francoist cause, with prevalence being lent to those who had been engaged with German culture. The DAAD and the Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung (Humboldt Foundation) supported such exchanges (Delgado 1992, p. 199; Hera 2002, p. 280).

Also, by that juncture, Nazi efforts to heighten cultural cooperation were illustrated in the way Spanish culture was promoted in Germany. Indeed, it is of significance that the Nazis appointed Faupel as the first German chargé d'affaires and later ambassador in Franco's Spain, albeit for a short period before being dismissed on account of his refusal to submit his relations with the Falange – Spain's fascist party – to Francoist guidelines. Subsequently, he again assumed the position of German–Spanish Society chairman, broadly promoting the society's activities (Janué 2008a, 2008b). Several Spanish Falangist academics and scholars either with high-ranking positions within Franco's government or with his determined approval were invited to Germany by the German–Spanish Society during this period. In

addition, Spanish language and literature readerships were funded in several German universities (Rodríguez 2008). The priority of German scholars who wrote on the subject of Spain during the Civil War was to legitimize the Francoist uprising. They pointed to the anti-national character of the republican regime, which ran counter to the spirit of Spain, and to the alignment of the Falangist ideology with the Spanish spirit.

In January 1939, Spain and Germany signed a spiritual and cultural cooperation agreement (Hera 2002, pp. 404–431); however, it was never ratified owing to opposition from the Vatican and the hierarchy of the Spanish Catholic Church (Marquina 1979). Nevertheless, once the Civil War had ended, the National Socialist regime was in an excellent position to exert its influence on Spanish science, culture and politics due to its contribution to Franco's victory and its support of Germanophile academic elites.

Following the outbreak of World War II, Spain became part of the National Socialist plan to redefine the European area. The German war industry became dependent on Spanish supplies. As a result, German interest to establish cultural rapprochement increased. The dissemination of the ideas concerning the genuine values of Spanish identity and culture, as advocated by Francoist imperialism (Saz 2003), was deemed to be a useful tool of propaganda on the American continent. It achieved a leading role in the publications of numerous German academics and scholars renowned in the field of Hispanic studies.

### **The character of the Spanish nation and the legitimization of Francoism**

With the National Socialist regime recently established, Herbert von Beckerath published a booklet on "Spain since the revolution" (Beckerath 1933b) which was the upshot of a presentation given one year earlier at the Deutsche Hochschule für Politik (German University College for Politics), an academy attached to the Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda (Reich Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda). From 1925 onwards, university professor and economist Beckerath directed the Institut für Gesellschafts- und Wirtschaftswissenschaften (Institute of Social and Economic Sciences) in Bonn. Although there is no record of him being an expert on Spain, it is known that he travelled to the country: in 1932, he gave a presentation on Germany's economic crisis at the German Centre for Exchange and Study and, in 1934, he gave another presentation on state authority and economic freedom at the Centre for Spanish–German Scholarly Exchange (Hera 2002, pp. 212, 302–303). Beckerath devoted the aforementioned booklet to questioning the viability of the Republic. In this framework, he highlighted two features he considered to be most important for Spain's development: the fact that it, historically and culturally, lay midway between Africa and Europe and between the East and the West; and the fact that it was a geographically isolated country with major differences within its



mainland regions and major communication barriers between these regions and further afield. This notwithstanding, he distinguished three elements that were shared by the Spanish: poor education, individualism and a Catholic lifestyle coupled with religious fanaticism. The “*caciquismo*”, i.e. the type of political clientelism which characterized the Restoration monarchy (1874–1931) fitted this description. However, the colonial disaster of 1898 plunged this system into a crisis, triggering the so-called regenerationism (*regeneracionismo*), an intellectual movement which claimed political and socio-economical regeneration. The monarchy sought to quell these demands imposing the reactionary dictatorship of Primo de Rivera in 1923. According to Beckerath, this explained why the republican revolution, which had originally arisen within socialist, workers and freemasons groups, could gain broad support. Even so, he thought socialist ideas were not aligned with Spain’s largely agricultural and petty bourgeois social structure. Consequently, the socialist forces that led the republican revolution paradoxically had to defend democratic-bourgeois values.

In 1933, Beckerath (1933a) also published an essay on Spain and Germany in a Spanish-language edition of the journal *Zeitschrift für Politik*, which in the following year (1934) appeared also in German. There he compared the republican and the National Socialist revolutions and described the Spanish republican revolution as being bourgeois, anti-feudal and anticlerical. This stance had already been overcome in Germany, where Marxist inclinations – still observed in Spain – had also been defeated. He speculated that after its republican era, Spain should adopt a political system that matched its national character – namely renewed Catholicism – in the same way as Germany had done. Both countries would then be able to mutually acknowledge the common ground they shared.

Beckerath is the only author among those discussed here who later became alienated from National Socialism. He ultimately emigrated to the USA, where he published a denunciation of totalitarianism (1942).

After the outbreak of the Civil War, Edmund Schramm was quick to legitimize the Franco coup. A Romanist and Hispanist, Schramm was a professor at the German College in Madrid and was attached to the Centre for Spanish–German Scholarly Exchange, where he was involved in the publication of the journals *Investigación y Progreso* and *Boletín Bibliográfico* between 1926 and 1929 (Hera 2002, pp. XIII, 21, 53, 61, 63, 87, 89, 130, 355, 435, 469, 483). Additionally, he was a member of the German Group for the Spanish Intellectual Union (*GAUIE*, according to its abbreviation in Spanish) and the Görres Society, having contributed to the *Spanische Forschungen der Görresgesellschaft*. At the University of Greifswald, he wrote a postdoctoral thesis (*Habilitation*) on the Spanish anti-liberal Donoso Cortés. His supervisor was Helmut Petriconi, to whom we will come back later. This work was published by the Ibero-American Institute Hamburg (Schramm 1935). In late 1936, Schramm gave a lecture at the University of Greifswald in order to explain the political preconditions that had led to the Civil War, also published as an

article in the *Zeitschrift für Politik* (Schramm 1937). According to this article, the main reason for the Spanish Civil War was Spain's earlier failure to create a national state. This failure had been conditioned by the dissolution of the Spanish Empire and the loss of the fight for religious unity in Europe. This gave rise to Spain's marginalization on the continent. Nonetheless, the Spanish–American War led to a movement for reform in relation to which the writers of the Generation of 98 (on these writers, see Schramm 1933) were an exponent. However, the weakness of Spanish national conscience made it impossible for them to overcome political tensions. In addition to the inadequacy of the state's social security system, these tensions led to the advent of the Second Republic. In relation to this, Schramm addressed the shortcomings of the republican regime, which he claimed was led by scholars and was alien to the people who were divided and in need of social renewal. According to Schramm, Franco's military uprising was intended to bring together the various political groups who sought to avoid the bolshevizing of Spain.

During World War II, Schramm edited a book (1940) to demonstrate France's military and propaganda-based involvement on the side of the Second Republic during the Civil War, which was published by an agency controlled by the German foreign office (Michels 1993, p. 37; Botsch 2006, p. 263). The body of the work is formed by a compilation of documents. Nevertheless, the most suggestive section is the introduction on France's attitude *via-à-vis* Spain from a historical perspective. According to Schramm, France supported the Republic because its imperialist interests were associated with keeping Spain weak. The advent of the Spanish Republic encouraged French cultural imperialism and its political ideals of western democracy with respect to Spain. This explained the inability of the Second Republic to free Spain from its political impotence. Yet, forces arose that were able to end the Republic and France was not able to stop Franco's victory.

German violin player, Hispanist and Romanist Werner Beinhauer also deemed it important to justify Franco's coup. He had spent three years in Madrid, studying under the prominent Spanish classical literature specialist Américo Castro and had attained a Ph.D. under the supervision of the renowned Romanist and Hispanist Leo Spitzer, with a dissertation on Spanish colloquial language, a subject area in which he became an internationally acknowledged expert. In 1937, he published a book addressed to a German readership in which he justified Franco's coup on the basis of the Spanish national character. The leading feature of Spain's national character, he claimed, was the importance Spaniards gave to individual freedom, entailing anarchy and indiscipline. This would explain the difficulties of the Spanish when it came to organizing society and being governed. Beinhauer related Spanish pride and nobility – *Hidalguía* – to a sense of self-satisfaction that is indifferent to material accomplishments and money, which would explain the detachment and indolence witnessed among Spaniards. The Civil War compelled the Spanish to give in to the need for subordination and suspend



individual interest for those of society at large. Beinhauer emphasized that the nature of Spanish individualism was incompatible with communist and socialist ideas. In contrast, the modernizing, revolutionary nature of the Falange, though compatible with traditional devoutness, was also able to respond to future challenges and was tied to the growth of social equality and a sense of the common good. Beinhauer insisted that the new national Spain should not be founded only on traditional right-wing politics. This final section was taken out of the Spanish language version of the book published in 1944 (Beinhauer 1944), which is understandable given that Franco had already brought the most radical segments of the Falange in line some time ago.

In 1938, Beinhauer published an anthology of texts exemplifying the ideological groups existing in Franco's Spain. Although the texts were in Spanish, they addressed a German readership, as indicated by clarifying notes on Spanish vocabulary. Among the authors were the renowned regenerationist writer and neo-traditionalist ideologue Ramiro de Maeztu as well as Franco himself, represented by a speech on his programme for the “New Spain”. The book included a copy of the Falange programme.

Beinhauer was interrogated by the Gestapo in 1939 due to statements made against National Socialism and he was expelled from the university (Doetsch 1984). Nevertheless, he continued to back the Francoist cause unwaveringly. During World War II, he was a captain in the German army and was taken prisoner by the Soviet Union where he was held for nine years. In 1966, the Spanish government awarded him the Order of Civil Merit.

### **The mission of *Hispanidad* in the new order of Europe**

During World War II, the subject of the character of Spain and its people still figured in the works of German scholars and in the German press. Nevertheless, during the course of the war, the dissemination of the ideas of *Hispanidad* took on a particularly significant role. The doctrine of the “Race of *Hispanidad*” (*Raza de la Hispanidad*) stems from the commemoration of the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus on 12 October 1492 under the sponsorship of the Catholic Monarchs. The recollection of this feat sought to strengthen Spain's image in Latin America, highlighting the unity of the Hispanic peoples. In connection with the doctrine lies the concept of “Hispanism” (*Hispanismo*), affirming the historical existence of an authentic Spanish culture linked to Catholicism. This culture had been taken by Spaniards to America, transforming its native inhabitants into members of the same race. Hispanism stood in stark contrast to the concept of Pan Americanism, which had more of an Anglo-Saxon focus. In 1918, the Day of the Race (*Día de la Raza*) was established by decree as a national holiday in Spain. In the context of the Second Republic, *Hispanidad*, popularized by the aforementioned Ramiro de Maeztu (1934), became an essential element in conservative ideology.

Spanish fascists adopted the concept of *Hispanidad* emphasizing the imperial aspect that they deemed to be a precondition for the resurgence of the fatherland (Diffie 1943; González and Limón 1988, pp. 26–30, 57–70; Delgado 1992, pp. 123–124; Saz 2003, pp. 184–185). To them, *Hispanidad* also expressed Spain's mission to re-establish its Catholic cultural empire in Europe. During the early years of the Franco government, policies to promote *Hispanidad* would legitimize the dictatorship, associating it with imperial Spain, the persistence of which the regime stated was its universal mission (Bristol 1942–1943; Delgado 1988, pp. 8–9; Barbeito 1989; González and Limón 1998, pp. 74–80, 88–89). Beyond Spain's borders, *Hispanidad* sought to increase Spain's involvement in the New Order of Europe, especially following the start of World War II.

In Germany, the Day of the Race was first regularly celebrated in the interwar period. The Ibero-American Institute became the institution responsible for organizing commemorative events in the German capital (Bartelt 2003). It is noteworthy that when this institute was set up, its promoters chose the name Ibero-American instead of Latin American, because the latter name was that promoted by France in line with its interests in America. The Ibero-American Institute promoted the history and culture of Latin America as a civilizing colonialization by Iberian countries, thereby challenging US influence in the American sub-continent.

Later, the Day of the Race was celebrated by the Ibero-American Institute to promote Nazi Germany's special relationship with Francoist Spain (Bartelt 2003, p. 86). Once World War II had broken out, *Hispanidad* was neatly aligned with the ambitions of the Axis forces in preventing a continental alliance led by North America.

Under the Third Reich, the rhetoric of the Day of the Race celebrations depicted Spain as the mother of its Latin American daughters (Bartelt 2003, p. 86). In the context of this symbolism, the Ibero-American Institute presented itself as a brother of Spain and, as such, an uncle to Ibero-America. Spain also capitalized on this policy as it enabled the country to introduce itself as a colleague of powerful Germany. Accordingly, celebrating the Festival of the Race also symbolized transatlantic fascist consensus. Following the US entry into the war against Germany and the resulting rupture of diplomatic relations with the Reich by most Latin American countries, the German foreign office abolished the celebration of the Day of the Race in 1942.

Several German academics supported the dissemination of *Hispanidad* in Germany. The already mentioned Helmut Petriconi, a Romanist and Hispanist, and professor at the University of Greifswald, followed this pattern. Petriconi was a member of the German–Spanish Society Board of Directors and the editorial board of the Spanish language journal *Ensayos y Estudios* published from January 1939 onwards by the Ibero-American Institute. In 1941, Petriconi published an article concerning Spain's image in the minds of Germans. It established that the decisive moment in the development of German–Spanish cultural relations was the coronation of Charles V as Holy



Roman Emperor and King of Spain around 1520. It also highlighted the fact that in the most famous seventeenth century German literary work, *Der abenteuerliche Simplicissimus* by Grimmelshausen, “Spain” was understood to include the whole Hispanic empire. Petriconi hence deduced that the “Spanish black legend” (*leyenda negra española*) – a concept popularized by the Spanish intellectual Julián Juderías (Juderías 1914) to refer to the set of anti-Spanish propaganda that spread throughout Europe from the sixteenth century onwards – was false. Petriconi attributed the partial distancing of both countries in the eighteenth century to the end of the Habsburg dynasty in Spain and the resulting strengthening of French influence. He states that in the nineteenth century, a new wave of German enthusiasm for Spanish culture arose, albeit founded on an idealized image of King Philip II – successor of Charles V – and the Counter Reformation. After World War I, the works of authors such as Unamuno and Baroja – whose rediscovery of Castile gave Germans a more realistic portrayal of the country – were translated into German. At the same time, Petriconi lamented that the importance of the kinship between Spain and Hispanic America was still being underestimated. He referred to the Franco coup as a moment of imperial resurgence.

Hispanist Hermann Hüffer, who was a culture advisor at the German Embassy in Madrid, also stated that the period of Charles V was a crowning moment in the development of relations between Germany and Spain (Hüffer 1942, 1951). Likewise, he related Spain’s entry into decline to the end of the Habsburg dynasty and the subsequent distancing from Germany. He further pointed out that mutual relations would once again take off in the last decade of the eighteenth century, as witnessed e.g. by the idealization of the Spanish Golden Age by German romantics. Hüffer underlined the heightened scientific and cultural exchange that took place at the end of World War I, that was followed by a setback after the proclamation of the Second Republic and the accession to power of National Socialism. Nevertheless, relations between the countries would later improve on account of Franco’s national uprising and his victory.

Hispanist professor Rudolf Grossmann from the University of Hamburg also emphasized Francoist Spain’s new European mission. He became the Ibero-American Institute Hamburg’s director in 1936 and was one of the authors of the renowned German and Spanish language dictionary (1932–1937). In 1941, he predicted Spain’s resurgence as a major power (1941), claiming that Spain’s responsibility towards Europe historically involved defending the continent from foreign forces. 1492 would be the key date with the culmination of the *Reconquista*, definitively defeating Islam and ousting the Jews, and with the expansion of Christianity overseas with the discovery of America. Grossman compared these accomplishments with those of National Socialist Germany. Even so, the contemporary era saw the emergence of two elements that would weaken the Spanish spirit: the clash between liberal thinking and ecclesiastical tradition, and private

conflicts between mainland regions. The loss of Spain's remaining colonies in 1898 led to its decline to a second-rank country, causing the nation's spiritual collapse. The first to react were the scholars who launched a movement of renewal, albeit devoid of political intervention. Consequently, the country was plunged into political disarray culminating in the overthrow of the monarchy and the accession of the Second Republic. Grossmann classes the republican regime as the "last dark chapter in the Spanish drama" when all the remains of the state order had been dissolved: now the time had come for Spain to again fulfil its European mission; namely, acting as the surveillance gateway against enemies of the West, General Franco was instrumental in this historic task with the backing of the Falange. With its focus on fascism and National Socialism, the Falange associated itself with the newer, more creative Europe. Franco had enabled a single political movement in favour of the new ideas, allowing him to be compared to the Italian Duce or the German Führer (cf. Grossmann 1942, 1943).

## Conclusions

In their relations with Spain, the National Socialists used cultural diplomacy to reach their goals. The promotion of Spanish culture in Germany aimed to convey a message of interest and consideration for Hispanic culture. The fostering of Hispanism in Germany was founded on personal continuities in mutual relations unfolding since the interwar period in both Spain and Germany (Aschmann 2000). The authorities sought to appeal to the most prominent academics and scholars of the time, always under the premise of ideological common ground. Indeed, the discourse expounded in the publications discussed here dovetail with the imperialist interests of Nazi foreign policy in relation to Spain: integration in the new totalitarian order and the strengthening of its ties with Latin America.

The perspectives of German Hispanists during National Socialism were scarcely different from those in the preceding decades. This is despite the fact that the authors analysed here claimed that they sought to provide an alternative viewpoint from earlier ones, referring to the orientalisering, idealistic stereotypes from the period of Romanticism and to those that had focussed on explaining Spain's decline since the Spanish–American War in 1898. The latter group of images above all, especially French images, served as a European pattern about what the Spaniards were like.

Several of these authors claimed that certain influential romantic paradigms concerning the Spanish people were inaccurate. However, by and large, their works depict the basic characteristics attributed to the Spanish people at the time in Europe: material decline, major social and regional disparities, an outdated mentality, idleness and indolence, individualism and indiscipline, ignorance, superficiality and aestheticism, religious fanaticism and fatalism, political corruption and lack of a modern social and national conscience. The only positive features that stand out were humanity, genius



and passion. In the eyes of many Europeans, these were poorly valued compared to the "bourgeois virtues" of merit and achievements. But we should not forget that the authors we have considered sought to present a far less negative, less deterministic assessment of these characteristics than was normal during their time. They took as a point of reference the most highly regarded right-wing proposals of regenerationism, which the fascists of the Falange also used to bolster their nationalist discourse.

The texts discussed here incorporate some innovative aspects compared to previous literature. The authors analyse the coming of the Spanish Second Republic, in most cases without resorting to the simplistic vision to see it as a Bolshevik plot. They argue instead that the fundamental reasons behind it lay in the historical negligence by the former Spanish regimes. Along these lines, the two key institutions that came under criticism were the Church and the monarchy, and the reason can be summed up as follows: lack of sensitivity and absence of a desire and capacity for social modernization.

The negative assessment of the Spanish Church is striking considering that several of these authors were Catholic. Nevertheless, there was a broad understanding that Spanish life and culture were marked by excessive clericalism. This does not mean they thought Christianity should be removed from Spanish society. The Spanish Church should and could accommodate reform, thanks to Franco and Falangism. Spain needed to remain a Christian country because Christianity formed the essential axis of unity among Spaniards, which was seen as important also for Europe as a whole.

Most of the authors analysed acknowledged the will for social change within the republican regime, although they also observe its failure to implement such change. The reasons for this failure were its anti-clericalism as well as French democratic-liberal and Bolshevik influences. The legitimization of Franco's coup and the resulting Civil War was based on their nature as a national uprising in the face of the collapse of the nation brought about by the republican regime. The Franco regime was described as the only one that could save Spain as a nation and mobilize a desire for reform whilst maintaining a Spanish Catholic essence. Several authors warned that the new regime should not revert into the conservatism of the past but allow itself to be guided by the modernizing fascist stances of the Falange.

Concerning their interpretation of the Spanish Empire and *Hispanidad*, the authors we have considered revised their historical meaning in comparison to what was common in Europe at the time and in line with Spanish conservative and Francoist thought. Although the Spanish Empire collapsed, they made no negative general assessment of its management by the Iberian nation. The extension of Christian hegemony to the American continent, implemented by the Spanish Empire, was viewed as an enlargement of European hegemony and unity. Spain's imperial mission in America should no longer be to regain territorial possession, but instead achieving spiritual dominance. The concept of *Hispanidad*, revived under Francoism, was now construed as the expansion of the cultural New Order of Europe

in America in the face of Anglo-Saxon and Bolshevik threats. This transforms *Hispanidad* into a notion fully in keeping with German geostrategic interests as well as an instrument for the rapprochement between the Franco regime and Germany.

The authors considered here acknowledged Spain as a vital player in Europe's historical struggle for Christian unity. Spain had been defeated in the past but with Franco she would be resurrected. The authors secularized the struggle for universalization of Christianity converting it into a struggle for the New Order of Europe led by totalitarian states. The conclusion from this was that Spain needed to play a leading role in the New Order of Europe because it had contributed to saving Europe in the past. This equating of Catholicism with Christianity and then with the New Order brought several benefits and the authors studied had no qualms in accepting this. The Catholic Hispanists applied this notion according to their religious interests; it provided common ground with Francoist national Catholicism; it also connected with the less clerical perspectives of National Socialism and the radical fringes of the Falange. This interpretation was in line with the National Socialist concept of a Europe united under totalitarianism and anti-Bolshevism and it pleased the Francoist desire that Spain would play a significant role in the New Order of Europe.

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# 15 Copenhagen revisited

*Mark Walker*

In September of 1941, the German physicist Werner Heisenberg visited his Danish mentor Niels Bohr in occupied Denmark. The contexts of this encounter are important. Along with the course of the Second World War and particularly the invasion of the Soviet Union, the scientific progress made in the German “uranium project”, and the ideological struggle within German physics, perhaps the most important context was German “cultural imperialism” during the Nazi period, which included cultural exchanges and often served foreign policy and other broader political concerns. This essay will revisit “Copenhagen” by first examining the postwar construction of this visit by various actors for various reasons, and then scrutinizing the actual history in context.

## **Postwar versions of Copenhagen**

The earliest known source for Niels Bohr’s version of the Copenhagen visit is a 1946 letter the physicist Rudolf Ladenburg wrote to Samuel Goudsmit:

Thank you very much for your illuminating letter. It confirms in some respects, what Niels Bohr told us: Heisenberg and Weizsäcker visited Bohr in 1941 and expressed their hope and belief that if the war would last long enough, the atomic bomb would bring the decision for Germany.

(Ladenburg, R. 23 October 1946, to Goudsmit, Samuel [letter] Private Papers of Samuel Goudsmit. College Park, MD: American Institute of Physics)

When the Dutch mathematician Bartel van der Waerden asked Heisenberg about Copenhagen in 1948, Heisenberg responded that:

When I spoke with Bohr in Copenhagen in the autumn of 1941, I asked him the question whether a physicist had the moral right to work on atomic problems during wartime. Bohr asked in reply, whether I believed that the military use of atomic energy was possible, and I answered: yes, I knew it.



I then repeated my question, and to my surprise Bohr answered that the mobilization of physicists in every country during the war was inevitable and that it was therefore also justified. Bohr evidently thought it impossible that the physicists of all nations would unite in this way against their governments, so to speak; he also told me last summer [1947] that he had been not willing to discuss this point and that he therefore had taken my question more as indirect information about the extent of our knowledge...

(Heisenberg, W. 28 April 1948 to van der Waerden, Bartel III. Abt., Rep. 93, Nr. 1705. Berlin: Archives of the Max Planck Society, hereafter abbreviated as AMPS. Note on sources: I used the Heisenberg papers before they were transferred to the Max Planck Society archives, and assume that what I found at Heisenberg's former institute in Munich is now in these archives in Berlin)

Thus the early postwar accounts of Heisenberg's and Weizsäcker's visit were already difficult to reconcile.

After the war, Heisenberg and Weizsäcker pursued a careful and nuanced strategy with regard to their wartime work. On the one hand, they denied that there was a conspiracy to keep atomic bombs out of Nazi hands. On the other hand, they did claim that they had tried to arrange an agreement among all physicists to forestall all such weapons – but did not want to call the latter a “conspiracy”. Heisenberg's reply to van der Waerden also fits well with an unpublished manuscript he composed around the same time on “Active and Passive Opposition”. In this essay, Heisenberg essentially argued that neither withdrawing into “inner exile”, nor confronting the National Socialist state directly were effective, rather were at best “passive opposition”. In contrast, people who were working within the system, where one often had to make compromises with the regime, were sometimes in a position to do real good, which he defined as “active opposition” (Heisenberg, W. 12 November 1947 [manuscript] “Die aktive und die passive Opposition im Dritten Reich” III. Abt., Rep. 93, Nr. 1705. Berlin: AMPS).

This was the foundation of the myth of the German Atomic Bomb: staying in the system was opposition; because Heisenberg and Weizsäcker were in the system, not only could they help Bohr and his colleagues, they could also (at least attempt) to forestall all nuclear weapons on all sides. Indeed, this was an excellent postwar strategy: they could appear to have been willing to deny Hitler nuclear weapons if it had been necessary, but without betraying Germany.

### ***Brighter than a thousand suns***

Throughout the first decade of the postwar period, stories or rumours about “Copenhagen” were circulating inside and outside of Germany. When the Swiss author Robert Jungk approached Heisenberg and Weizsäcker to discuss their wartime work, Heisenberg turned him down, but Weizsäcker did meet with him and may have told him about their visit to Copenhagen.

In 1956, Jungk's influential book, *Brighter than a Thousand Suns*, appeared in German and publicized the 1941 conversation between Niels Bohr and Werner Heisenberg in occupied Copenhagen.

[Heisenberg] ... gradually and cautiously steered the conversation towards the question of the atom bomb. But unfortunately he never reached the stage of declaring frankly that he and his group would do everything in their power to impede the construction of such a weapon if the other side would consent to do likewise. The excessive prudence with which both men approached the subject caused them in the end to miss it altogether. When Heisenberg asked whether Bohr considered it probable that such a bomb could be constructed, the latter ... replied in guardedly negative terms. Thereupon Heisenberg nerved himself to assure the other with all the emphasis at his command that he knew it to be perfectly possible to produce such a weapon and that it could actually be manufactured, if a very great effort were made within a very short time.

Bohr himself was much troubled by Heisenberg's account of the position, so much so that he paid less than the right amount of attention to Heisenberg's remarks later about the dubious moral aspect of such a weapon.

(Jungk 1958, p. 101. This is an English translation of the passage that appeared in the first German edition)

After the publication of Jungk's book, both Heisenberg and Weizsäcker wrote separately to Jungk to correct and clarify things. Weizsäcker's reaction to Jungk's book was complex. On the one hand, he was grateful for the sympathetic account, but on the other hand, he wrote to Jungk that his account was not precise and subtle enough, comparing it to someone who used a red marker to emphasize aspects of a Rembrandt painting. In particular, Weizsäcker told Jungk that: (1) there was no agreement not to make the bomb, or to conceal it; (2) that there was agreement about not wishing for atomic bombs; and (3) he was not sure what would have happened if atomic bombs had appeared feasible (von Weizsäcker, C F. 6 November 1956 to Jungk, Robert [letter] III. Abt., Rep. 111, Nr. 250. Berlin: AMPS).

For his part, Heisenberg did not want people to think that he considered himself on a par with the Germans who tried to assassinate Hitler (Heisenberg, W. 17 November 1956 to Jungk, Robert [letter] III. Abt., Rep. 93, Nr. 1705. Berlin: AMPS). Jungk wrote back in turn and asked about Copenhagen. When Heisenberg obliged, Jungk published excerpts from these letters in the second edition of *Brighter*, which was now translated into several languages, including Danish and English. These included a fleshed-out version of what Heisenberg had written van der Waerden in 1948.

My visit to Copenhagen took place in autumn 1941, actually I think it was at the end of October. At this time we in the "Uranverein" [uranium club], as a result of our experiments with uranium and heavy water, had come to



the following conclusion: “It will definitely be possible to build a reactor from uranium and heavy water which will provide energy . . .”

. . . This talk took place on an evening walk in a district near Ny-Carlsberg. Being aware that Bohr was under the surveillance of the German political authorities and that his assertions about me would probably be reported to Germany, I tried to conduct this talk in such a way as to preclude putting my life into immediate danger. This talk probably started with my question as to whether or not it was right for physicists to devote themselves in wartime to the uranium problem – as there was the possibility that progress in this sphere could lead to grave consequences in the technique of war. Bohr understood the meaning of this question immediately, as I realized from his slightly frightened reaction. He replied as far as I can remember with a counter question. “Do you really think that uranium fission could be utilized for the construction of weapons?” I may have replied: “I know that this is in principle possible, but it would require a terrific technical effort, which, one can only hope, cannot be realized in this war.” Bohr was shocked by my reply, obviously assuming that I had intended to convey to him that Germany had made great progress in the direction of manufacturing atomic weapons.

(Jungk 1958, pp. 102–104)

Heisenberg wrote more about Copenhagen in his letter, but either Jungk chose not to reproduce it, or Heisenberg edited it out:

I then asked Bohr once more, whether given the obvious moral misgivings, it might be possible that all physicists agree that the work on atomic bombs, which in any case could only be manufactured with an enormous technical effort, should not be attempted.

But Bohr said that it would be hopeless to try and influence what happens in the individual countries, and that it would be so to speak the natural course of events for physicists to work on the production of weapons in their countries.

(Heisenberg, W. 18 January 1957 to Jungk, Robert [letter] III.  
Abt., Rep. 93, Nr. 1705. Berlin: AMPS)

Weizsäcker and Heisenberg appear to have wanted both to distance themselves from some of Jungk’s claims and to benefit from them. On the one hand, their private and sometimes detailed criticism of Jungk’s book was certainly accurate; on the other hand, Weizsäcker denied only that the Germans had an agreement not to make atomic bombs for Germany and in particular did not contradict Heisenberg’s reiterated claim that he had tried to enlist Bohr’s help in forestalling all atomic bombs. As far as Jungk was concerned, he may have simply read between the lines of Heisenberg’s and Weizsäcker’s suggestive juxtaposition: We could not make atomic bombs and were happy about that; we tried to stop the Americans from making them as well.

*Niels Bohr's unsent letters to Werner Heisenberg (1958/2002)*

In 2002, the Bohr family approved the release of several manuscripts from Niels Bohr. The publication of the second edition of *Brighter* in Danish and English translation in 1958 had received a great deal of attention. Niels Bohr was clearly disturbed both by Heisenberg's account of their 1941 conversation and its publication. He drafted several letters to Heisenberg in response. Although Bohr never mailed the letters, his side of the story did circulate more widely among other scientists, especially with those closest to him. Bohr had been in:

... such a difficult and dangerous position during the German occupation, the visit was an event that had to make a quite extraordinary impression on us all, and I therefore carefully noted every word uttered in our conversation, during which, constantly threatened as we were by the surveillance of the German police, I had to assume a very cautious position.

(Dörries 2005, p. 151)

However, Bohr also recognized that:

... at that time and ever since, I have always had the definite impression that you and Weizsäcker had arranged the symposium at the German [Cultural] Institute [*Deutsches Wissenschaftliches Institut*, DWI], in which I did not take part myself as a matter of principle, and the visit to us in order to assure yourselves that we suffered no harm and to try in every way to help us in our dangerous situation.

(Dörries 2005, p. 111, 113)

Most of all, Bohr wanted to know why Heisenberg and Weizsäcker had been allowed to come to Copenhagen. Indeed, this is what he had been asked after he fled Denmark in 1943.

The question of how far Germany had come occupied not only the physicists but especially the government and the secret intelligence service ... [who wanted to know] how the visit had been arranged and what purpose lay behind it, as one has wondered in particular how and with what authorization such a dangerous matter, of such great political importance, could be taken up with someone in an occupied and hostile country.

(Dörries 2005, pp. 153, 155, 157)

In his draft responses to Heisenberg, Bohr emphasized the theme of cultural collaboration: Heisenberg and Weizsäcker had urged Bohr and his colleagues to cooperate with the German occupation authorities.

... it made a strong impression both on Margrethe and me, and on everyone at the Institute that the two of you spoke to, that you and



Weizsäcker expressed your definite conviction that Germany would win and that it was therefore quite foolish for us to maintain the hope of a different outcome of the war and to be reticent as regards all German offers of cooperation....

(Dörries 2005, p. 109)

During conversations with Møller, Heisenberg and Weizsäcker sought to explain that the attitude of the Danish people towards Germany, and that of the Danish physicists in particular, was unreasonable and indefensible since a German victory was already guaranteed and that any resistance against cooperation could only bring disaster to Denmark.

(Dörries 2005, p. 131, 133)

Bohr and his colleagues were clearly unnerved by all this, telling Heisenberg that:

... my alarm was not lessened by hearing from the others at the Institute that Weizsäcker had stated how fortunate it would be for the position of science in Germany after the victory that you could help so significantly towards this end.

(Dörries 2005, p. 163)

Bohr's memory of their conversation about nuclear weapons differed from Heisenberg's in significant ways. First of all, whereas Heisenberg said that they had been taking an evening stroll in order to avoid being overheard, Bohr wrote that:

I also remember quite clearly our conversation in my room at the Institute, where in vague terms you spoke in a manner that could only give me the firm impression that, under your leadership, everything was being done in Germany to develop atomic weapons.

(Dörries 2005, p. 109)

Heisenberg told Jungk that Bohr had responded to him by asking whether he really believed that nuclear fission could be used as a weapon, but Bohr remembered:

... quite clearly the impression it made on me when, at the beginning of the conversation, you told me without preparation that you were certain that the war, if it lasted long enough, would be decided with atomic weapons. I did not respond to this at all, but as you perhaps regarded this as an expression of doubt, you related how in the preceding years you had devoted yourself almost exclusively to the question....

(Dörries 2005, p. 153, 155, 157)

Bohr perceptively suggested that Heisenberg's perception of the war had probably changed over time.

I am thinking not only of the strong conviction that you and Weizsäcker expressed concerning German victory, which did not correspond to our hopes, but more of how, during the course of the war, your conviction had to become less strong and finally end with the certainty of Germany's defeat....

(Dörries 2005, pp. 153, 155, 157)

Finally, Bohr wrote that, because Heisenberg had told him that: "he was working on the release of atomic energy and expressed his conviction that the war, if it did not end with a German victory, would be decided by such means" (Dörries 2005, p. 131), it was "quite incomprehensible to me that you should think that you hinted to me that the German physicists would do all they could to prevent such an application of atomic science ..." (Dörries 2005, p. 163).

When Bohr's unsent letters to Heisenberg were released in 2002, Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker was still alive and was asked about them. In an interview in a German newspaper, Weizsäcker explained that:

We came ... to the conclusion that we would not be finished, in any case not in the time that we thought was available. We then became afraid that the English or Americans could build atomic bombs quicker. Therefore we travelled together to Bohr. Heisenberg wanted to ask him to persuade the physicists in England and America not to build the atomic bomb ... But we knew that if we asked the Americans this directly, they would think that we wanted to build the bomb alone, we wanted to deceive them. Heisenberg thought that Bohr would be more likely to persuade his colleagues in America and England.

(Die Welt 2002)

When asked in a different newspaper interview what the motive was for Heisenberg trying to get Bohr to help him stop Allied physicists from working on nuclear weapons, he responded: "Well, so that a bomb would not fall on us" (Süddeutsche Zeitung 2002).

## **The history of Copenhagen**

### ***Carl Friedrich Von Weizsäcker's visit to Copenhagen in March 1941***

In March of 1941, Weizsäcker travelled to occupied Copenhagen. Because of his father Ernst, State Secretary in the Foreign Office, Weizsäcker both had strong political support and was serving German interests. Weizsäcker undoubtedly wanted to check up on Bohr, but also used his trip to gather intelligence about any Allied work on nuclear weapons. In his official report submitted after this visit, Weizsäcker noted that:



I was able to study the experimental and theoretical work at Bohr's institute, investigations of uranium and thorium fission by fast neutrons and deuterons. I have brought back copies and manuscripts of the work that is of great interest for our current investigations.

The technical production of energy from uranium fission is not being worked on in Copenhagen. They know that such investigations are being done in America, especially from Fermi. However, since the beginning of the war, no clear news has come from America. Bohr clearly did not know that we are working on these questions. Of course I encouraged this belief. Bohr himself brought the conversation to this point . . .

The American journal *Physical Review* was available in Copenhagen up until the issue from 15 January 1941. I have made photocopies of the most important publications. Arrangements have been made for the German Embassy to photocopy the journal for us as it arrives.

(von Weizsäcker, C. F. 1 October 1941 [report] Bericht über die Vortragsreise nach Kopenhagen vom 19.-24.3.41. Berlin: AMPS)

The official purpose of Weizsäcker's visit was to give talks. The chief German official in Denmark was impressed by Weizsäcker's performance and reported to the Foreign Office that the physicist was able to make his lecture in Danish before the Physical and Astronomical Society, "Is the World Infinite in Time and Space", so interesting that "most of the audience, including the commander of the German troops in Denmark, could easily follow him". Weizsäcker also visited Bohr's Institute for Theoretical Physics, where he spoke on: "The Relationship of Quantum Mechanics to Kantian Philosophy". Weizsäcker's talks had been "exceptionally effective, both for lay audiences as well as scientific Danish circles". For this reason, the German officials wanted to invite both Weizsäcker and Heisenberg to Copenhagen for a workshop for mathematics, astronomy and theoretical physics at the newly founded DWI (Der Bevollmächtigte des Deutschen Reiches. 27 March 1941 to Auswärtiges Amt [letter] REM 2943, 524–525. Potsdam: Bundesarchiv. For a general history of the DWIs, see Hausmann 2001.).

However, at this time Heisenberg was a controversial figure. Influential elements of the Nazi Party opposed giving him permission to travel abroad. This was clearly demonstrated when the powerful Hans Frank, Nazi General Governor in occupied Poland, wanted his childhood acquaintance Heisenberg to lecture at Frank's showcase research institute, the Institute for German Work in the East (Institut für Deutsche Ostarbeit). Rudolf Mentzel, a high-ranking official in the Reich Ministry of Education, carefully turned Frank down:

The Institute for German Work in the East has invited Heisenberg to give a lecture in Cracow . . . because of your personal request . . . The reason why I have not approved the lecture is his politically controversial personality. Heisenberg's connections to Jewish physicists and their supporters outside of Germany are so extensive, that up until now the

[Nazi] Party Chancellery has not been able to approve appointment of this very talented scholar to professorships in Munich and Vienna ... once again recently in Budapest the Jewish-influenced scientific community there enthusiastically demonstrated for Heisenberg.

(Mentzel, R. 29 July 1941 to Frank, Hans [letter] REM 690–76.

Potsdam: Bundesarchiv)

At this point in the war, the Nazi Party was not able to control what went on in Germany's ally Hungary. Indeed as Heisenberg wrote to his wife, his talk there had attracted four hundred people to the large auditorium of the physics institute: "The room was totally swamped, and I was celebrated like a prima donna" (Heisenberg and Heisenberg 2016, p. 142).

The September astrophysics workshop and Heisenberg's participation were eventually approved because of pressure from the Foreign Office and the newly founded DWI in Copenhagen, as well as the belated effects of Heisenberg's political rehabilitation (Walker 1995, pp. 130–139). Early in the summer, Weizsäcker made the case for Heisenberg:

Heisenberg's participation is important because, on one hand, as the leading German theoretical physicist he is difficult to surpass with regard to cultural propaganda effect, and on the other hand, because of his many years living in Denmark he is especially suited for Copenhagen and completely commands the Danish language.

(von Weizsäcker, C. F. 22 June 1941 to Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst [letter] REM 2943, 538. Potsdam: Bundesarchiv)

As the date of the workshop drew nearer, the acting director of the DWI increased the pressure on the Reich authorities:

... the planning for the event has already been completed and a cancellation would be very harmful for the interests of the DWI, which has just begun its work. The DWI does not care about the disciplinary composition of the German group. It was emphasized that the event is only a scientific colloquium without any official character ... Heisenberg would only be in Copenhagen for 2 to 3 days.

(REM. 2. September 1941 [memorandum] REM 2943, 534–535.

Potsdam: Bundesarchiv)

The workshop and Heisenberg's participation were approved at the last minute with the help of political connections.

Moreover, it is desirable for tactical reasons to carry out [Carl Friedrich von] Weizsäcker's event, because otherwise it is expected that the matter will not remain at the divisional level. The fact that the cultural political section of the Foreign Office has shown such special interest in



carrying out this event . . . is no doubt because the cultural political section fears an intervention from State Secretary [Ernst] von Weizsäcker.

(REM. 2 September 1941 [memo] REM 2943, 534–535.

Potsdam: Bundesarchiv)

*Context: scientific progress and war*

By September, 1941, the German uranium project had reached a point where nuclear weapons appeared feasible, but nevertheless years away. Isotope separation via an ultracentrifuge had made significant progress with other elements, but had not yet worked with a uranium compound. A nuclear reactor design in Leipzig under Heisenberg's direction had achieved significant neutron increase. In a report on model nuclear reactor experiments written for an internal conference in March of 1941, Heisenberg concluded that: "With heavy water the energy production [via a chain reaction in a nuclear reactor] is certainly possible" (Heisenberg, W. March 1941 [report] Bericht über Versuche mit Schichtenanordnungen von Präparat 38 und Paraffin am Kaiser Wilhelm-Institut f. Physik in Bln-Dahlem. Berlin: AMPS).

In 1940, Weizsäcker had shown theoretically that such a reactor could be used to create transuranic elements that could be chemically separated from uranium and also serve as nuclear explosives. Weizsäcker then went further in 1941 by first submitting an additional patent application for making plutonium in a nuclear reactor, and then bringing the military potential of this discovery to the attention of Army Ordnance (von Weizsäcker, C. F. 1941 [report] Energieerzeugung aus dem Uranisotop der Masse 238 und anderen schweren Elementen (Herstellung und Verwendung des Elements 94). I. Abt., Rep. 34, Nr. 73. Berlin: AMPS; Weizsäcker, C. F. 1941 [report] Kurzer Bericht über die eventuelle praktische Auswirkung der Uranuntersuchungen auf Grund einer Rücksprache mit Dr. Diebner, pp. 2–3, Berlin: AMPS).

In April of that year, the émigré physicist Rudolf Ladenburg passed on a message from Fritz Houtermans in Germany via his fellow émigré Fritz Reiche:

. . . a large number of German physicists are working intensively on the problem of the uranium bomb under the direction of Heisenberg, that Heisenberg himself tries to delay the work as much as possible; fearing the catastrophic results of a success. But he cannot help fulfilling the orders given to him, and if the problem can be solved, it will be solved probably in the near future. So he gave the advice to us to hurry up if U.S.A. will not come too late.

(Ladenburg, R. 14 April 1941 to Briggs, Lyman James [letter] Record Group 227, S-I Briggs, Box 5, Ladenburg Folder. Washington, D.C.: National Archives)

The claim that Heisenberg was delaying the work is contradicted by a wealth of evidence (Walker 1989). Houtermans himself submitted a report

in August of 1941 that, independent of Weizsäcker, explained that nuclear reactors could be used to make transuranic fissionable material (Houtermans, F. 1941 [report] *Zur Frage der Auslösung von Kern-Kettenreaktionen*, G-94. Munich: Archives of the German Museum). The final message was arguably most important: the bomb would be built if possible.

When Heisenberg and von Weizsäcker travelled to Copenhagen in September of 1941, Germany dominated Europe, Britain appeared helpless, the USA was remaining neutral, and the Lightning War (*Blitzkrieg*) against the Soviet Union was going well. The war had taken on an unprecedented scale and quality. It was now a ruthless war of ideologies, National Socialism against the Jewish-Bolshevist Soviet Union. At this point in time, nuclear weapons, which clearly would take several years to realize, would not have appeared relevant for the war Germany was fighting.

We know something about Heisenberg's perception of the war at this time through letters he wrote to his wife. Perhaps most interesting are first- and second-hand accounts Heisenberg reported that cast the Soviets in a harsh light:

Heimpel was telling me yesterday, he had a student in his seminar who had received a letter from Wolfgang Jaeger. The latter had fought in Lemberg and had written that the atrocities of the Russians there had been more terrible than what was reported in the papers....

(Heisenberg and Heisenberg 2016, p. 156)

Yesterday I was at Werner Marwede's. He had very interesting things about Russia to report, of the poverty in the population and the life of luxury among the "elite," counting just about a few hundred thousand only.

(Heisenberg and Heisenberg 2016, p. 160)

As Omer Bartov (1992) has shown, such accounts were inversions of reality. In 1941 it was the Germans who were committing atrocities against the Soviet population and POWs, while the terrible living conditions of the local people were caused by the German occupation, not Soviet communism. The fact that Heisenberg passed these reports on to his wife suggests that he gave them credence. For many Germans, perhaps including Heisenberg, the fact that the war was now against Communism gave it additional justification.

But even if the news from the front of advancing German armies was good, it was clear to Heisenberg that the cost in terms of human life had already been high:

I just got news from Bonhoeffer that the young Geltzer was killed in action in Russia. You may remember him – he had played a long time in our quartet, but that may have been before your time. – But he was also, after the war began, at our house once, when you must have seen him. He was such a



nice, gifted, and always cheerful person, so through and through all right. And how many people of his kind will yet perish this way!

(Heisenberg and Heisenberg 2016, pp. 158–159)

Overall, his perception of the war was ambivalent. Early in the Russian campaign, he wrote that:

The reports of the Wehrmacht from the east sound somewhat worrisome, the resistance of the Russians seems much stronger than anyone had expected initially. What would happen if the German push were to come to a standstill somewhere is barely imaginable.

(Heisenberg and Heisenberg 2016, p. 157)

When Heisenberg came to Copenhagen in September of 1941, the initial euphoria shared by many Germans about the war with the Soviet Union had given way to the wary realization that, although the Third Reich still appeared to be winning, the tide could turn disastrously for Germany. Together with the fact that nuclear weapons appeared possible, this set the stage for the visit to Copenhagen.

### *Heisenberg and Weizsäcker visit Copenhagen*

The available primary sources for this visit include letters Heisenberg wrote to his wife while in Copenhagen and the official reports submitted after the workshop by Heisenberg, Weizsäcker, and the German occupation government in Denmark. As far as his letters are concerned, Heisenberg had every reason to suspect that his mail might be opened and read. While these reports clearly have to be read carefully, it is important to note that, with so many different people observing what was done and said, the reports had to be realistic. Since the German authorities in Copenhagen and Berlin expected this visit to facilitate cultural collaboration, the reports had to address this issue in particular.

Heisenberg was: “looking forward to seeing Bohr very much, also the city that I am so fond of” (Heisenberg and Heisenberg 2016, p. 166). On Monday, 15 September, Heisenberg travelled to Copenhagen. “... Late at night I walked under a clear and starry sky through the city, darkened, to Bohr ...” As he wrote to his wife Elisabeth, their conversation immediately turned to difficult issues:

The conversation quickly veered to the human concerns and unhappy events of these times; about the human affairs the consensus is a given; in questions of politics I find it difficult that even a great man like Bohr cannot separate out thinking, feeling, and hating entirely. But probably one ought not to separate these ever.

(Heisenberg and Heisenberg 2016, p. 168)

Heisenberg was clearly troubled by Bohr's rejection of the German occupation, which put the German physicist into an awkward position, but also at some level understood it. The next day Heisenberg paid a visit to a different Danish scientist who was cooperating with the workshop and worked out the details of the programme. Later, Heisenberg visited Bohr's institute.

The rest of the German participants arrived in Copenhagen on Wednesday, while Heisenberg spent the entire evening with Bohr. A young Englishwoman stranded in Copenhagen was staying with the Bohrs: "During the unavoidable political conversations, where it naturally and automatically became my assigned part to defend our system, she retired, and I thought that was actually quite nice of her . . ." (Heisenberg and Heisenberg 2016, p. 169). While it is hardly surprising that Heisenberg could not avoid political discussions, this quotation does suggest that, in Copenhagen, both publicly and privately, Heisenberg felt obligated to defend German policies and the war.

The postwar accounts of this visit all agree that Heisenberg told Bohr both that the Germans were working on the potential military applications of nuclear fission, and that atomic bombs should work. Since there is no evidence of Heisenberg and Bohr taking a walk and Heisenberg appeared to be quite careful what he said in Bohr's home, the most likely place for this discussion was, as Bohr remembered, at his institute. Indeed, Heisenberg hints of this in a letter to his wife. In Bohr's institute on Thursday, Heisenberg and Weizsäcker "had some scientific discussions, the Copenhagen group, however, does not know much more than we do either" (Heisenberg and Heisenberg 2016, p. 169). Wherever it took place, Bohr must have been alienated by the revelation that Weizsäcker, who in March had encouraged Bohr to believe that the Germans were not working on the military applications of nuclear fission, had deceived him. However, this also clearly did not stop Bohr, Heisenberg and Weizsäcker from interacting in a friendly way.

The visit to Bohr's institute and discussions with the scientists there were definitely disappointing. As Heisenberg told Elisabeth:

Tomorrow begin the talks in the German Scientific Institute [DWI]; the first official talk is mine, tomorrow night. Sadly, the members of Bohr's institute will not attend for political reasons. It is amazing, given that the Danes are living totally unrestricted and are doing so well, how much hatred or fear has been galvanized here, so that even a rapprochement in the cultural arena – where it used to be automatic in earlier times – has become almost impossible. In Bohr's institute I gave a short talk in Danish, of course this was just like in the olden days (the people from the German Scientific Institute had explicitly approved), but nobody wants to go to the German Institute on principle, because during and after its founding a number of brisk militarist speeches on the New Order in Europe were given.

(Heisenberg and Heisenberg 2016, pp. 169–170)



When Heisenberg submitted his report on the workshop, he was quite clear about the fact that the Danes had refused to cooperate, and what he felt about it:

From being together with Danish colleagues, I have the impression that our relations with scientific circles in Scandinavia are now very difficult. Everywhere one encountered a very reserved, often even negative attitude. In the current situation only a few Danish colleagues are willing to work together scientifically in more or less official spaces, which is how they perceive the DWI. The Danes take this position, although almost all of the colleagues emphasized to me that they had no complaints about the behavior of the German armed forces.

(Heisenberg, W. 23 September 1941 [report] Bericht über die Teilnahme an einer astrophysikalischen Arbeitstagung im Deutschen Wissenschaftlichen Institut in Kopenhagen.

REM 2943, 547. Potsdam: Bundesarchiv)

Weizsäcker and Heisenberg probably did advise Bohr and his colleagues to cooperate with the German officials in Copenhagen, and in turn Bohr and his colleagues probably refused. For the Danes, participating in either the workshop or evening lectures would have been a morally objectionable and political act with unforeseen consequences. But for Heisenberg and Weizsäcker, such participation was simply the price for German officials, including representatives of the Foreign Office, to look out for Bohr's well-being.

The fact that Heisenberg and Weizsäcker consistently urged their Danish colleagues to cooperate with the German occupation authorities also suggests that, at this time, Heisenberg and Weizsäcker thought that Germany was going to win the war with the Soviet Union and that the Danes' future would be under Nazi control. Perhaps most important, Heisenberg and Weizsäcker were merely advising their Danish colleagues to do what they themselves were doing, working within the National Socialist system and being willing to make concessions in the hope of surviving, or perhaps even prospering.

The workshop proper began on Friday. In theory, it was run by Bengt Strømgren from the Copenhagen Observatory and his father Elis, which was an overt act of collaboration with the DWI. While Heisenberg reported that, from the Danish side, only the two Strømgrens and the members of the Observatory participated (Heisenberg, W. 23 September 1941 [report] Bericht über die Teilnahme an einer astrophysikalischen Arbeitstagung im Deutschen Wissenschaftlichen Institut in Kopenhagen. REM 2943, 547. Potsdam: Bundesarchiv), the DWI described this in a more favourable light, noting that "the important Danish astronomers and a few theoretical physicists were present". In any case, it is important to note that, whereas Bohr, perhaps the most prestigious scientist in the country, and his immediate colleagues boycotted the DWI, other prominent Danes did not.

On the German side, along with Heisenberg and Weizsäcker, two astrophysicists, Hans Kienle and Ludwig Biermann participated and introduced the individual sections of the workshop devoted to their specialties (Der Bevollmächtigte des Deutschen Reiches. 26 September 1941 to Auswärtiges Amt [letter] REM 2943, 544–545. Potsdam: Bundesarchiv). The workshop continued on into Saturday with morning and afternoon sessions interrupted by what Heisenberg called: “a big reception at the German embassy, with the meal being by far the best part of it . . .” (Heisenberg and Heisenberg 2016, p. 170). Indeed, in his report, Weizsäcker gushed with praise about the hospitality. The DWI had provided exceptionally pleasant space for the workshop. Weizsäcker was especially grateful for:

the convivial reception on one hand from the director of the institute, Dr. Domes, the Plenipotentiary of the German Reich, and the members of the Foreign Office delegation, and on the other from the Danish scholars, with whom the German participants have old scientific and personal connections.

(von Weizsäcker, C. F. 1 October 1941 [report] Zusammenfassender Bericht über die astrophysikalische Arbeitswoche in Kopenhagen vom 18.-24.9.41. REM 2943, 549–550. Potsdam: Bundesarchiv)

The DWI was not content with a specialized scientific workshop, rather took advantage of the opportunity to hold a lecture for a more general audience made up, on the one hand, of people Heisenberg described informally as the “German Colony” in Copenhagen (Heisenberg, W. 23 September 1941 [report] Bericht über die Teilnahme an einer astrophysikalischen Arbeitstagung im Deutschen Wissenschaftlichen Institut in Kopenhagen. REM 2943, 547. Potsdam: Bundesarchiv) including representatives of the Plenipotentiary of the German Reich and the Nazi Party (von Weizsäcker, C. F. 1 October 1941 [report] Zusammenfassender Bericht über die astrophysikalische Arbeitswoche in Kopenhagen vom 18.-24.9.41. REM 2943, 549–550. Potsdam: Bundesarchiv) and, on the other, prominent Danish representatives such as the rector and dean of the mathematical-scientific faculty from the University of Copenhagen, the president of the Rask-Orsted Foundation and colleagues from the Technical University.

Heisenberg’s lecture on: “The Current State of Our Knowledge of Cosmic Radiation and the Temperature of Stars” used a “clear and simple presentation”, which the DWI noted: “educated lay listeners could easily follow” and was “very well received by the Danish and German listeners” (Der Bevollmächtigte des Deutschen Reiches. 26 September 1941 to Auswärtiges Amt [report] REM 2943, 544–545. Potsdam: Bundesarchiv). Afterward Heisenberg socialized, discussing the “existing questions” with the local Nazi Party leader (Heisenberg, W. 23 September 1941 [report] Bericht über die Teilnahme an einer astrophysikalischen Arbeitstagung im Deutschen Wissenschaftlichen Institut in Kopenhagen. REM



2943, 547. Potsdam: Bundesarchiv) and making the acquaintance of a German architect who was supposed to build a new German school in Copenhagen.

On Saturday, the last full day Heisenberg was in Copenhagen, he once more visited Bohr at home, this time with Weizsäcker. “In many ways this was especially nice, the conversation revolved for a large part of the evening around purely human concerns, Bohr was reading aloud, I played a Mozart sonata (A-Major)”. In contrast, as Heisenberg wrote to his wife: “The return to Germany from the free Denmark made me quite gloomy. There people’s lives are still so carefree; here it is all tense in the utmost . . .” (Heisenberg and Heisenberg 2016, pp. 170–171).

As noted above, Heisenberg was clearly disappointed, including in his official report, that the scientists at Bohr’s institute had boycotted the workshop and Heisenberg’s evening lecture. For his part, Weizsäcker struck a defensive tone in his report: “The living proof that, even during the war, science is being carried on successfully in Germany, and the opportunity, in personal conversations to correct a series of inconsistent judgments about Germany, was certainly not without significance” (von Weizsäcker, C. F. 1 October 1941 [report] Zusammenfassender Bericht über die astrophysikalische Arbeitswoche in Kopenhagen vom 18.-24.9.41. REM 2943, 549–550. Potsdam: Bundesarchiv). As far as the DWI was concerned, the event was a success: “Both the colloquia as well as the lectures during the workshop by excellent German scientists helped lead new Danish researchers to the DWI and thereby expand the circle of the institute” (Der Bevollmächtigte des Deutschen Reiches. 26 September 1941 to Auswärtiges Amt [report] REM 2943, 544–545. Potsdam: Bundesarchiv). A few months later, the Foreign Office told the Reich Ministry of Education that: “. . . from the standpoint of cultural politics, a further accentuation of Professor Heisenberg is extremely desirable” (Auswärtiges Amt. 27 November 1941 to REM. REM 2943, 557. Potsdam: Bundesarchiv). Although Heisenberg and Weizsäcker fell well short of their goal of cajoling or coercing Bohr and his colleagues to collaborate openly with the German occupation by participating in the astrophysics conference at the DWI, the German officials in Copenhagen and Berlin were pleased. Some Danish scientists had taken part, while Heisenberg’s and Weizsäcker’s scientific prestige ensured that the event made a good impression on influential Germans in Copenhagen. In the end, any cultural collaboration was a good start.

## Conclusion

After the war, Heisenberg claimed that he had travelled to Copenhagen in order to forestall all nuclear weapons. In contrast, after the war, Bohr claimed that Heisenberg had told him that Germany was going to win the war, if necessary with nuclear weapons. Why did Heisenberg reveal the German uranium project to Bohr? This was a treasonous act. Heisenberg was clearly well aware of the need to be careful about what he said. The

war in September, 1941 was against the Soviet Union. Although Heisenberg was already shocked at the cost in lives lost, it still appeared that Germany would prevail, as it had so far in the war. But a future conflict with the United States was on the horizon. As far as science was concerned, Heisenberg did see a clear path to the atomic bomb, but not in Germany. It would have been reasonable for him to assume that the Americans might be able to do it quicker. If Heisenberg and Weizsäcker tried to enlist Bohr's help to forestall American nuclear weapons, then they were also looking out for their own interests.

How could Bohr have helped Heisenberg? If he had it, Bohr could have provided intelligence about the Allied atomic bomb effort. When Heisenberg revealed that the Germans were investigating the possibility of nuclear weapons, he tacitly invited Bohr to tell him what he knew. When Bohr either said nothing in reply, as he remembered, or merely asked in return whether Heisenberg believed that this was possible, as the German physicist recalled, the result was the same. As he wrote his wife, Heisenberg was left with the impression that the Danes knew no more than the Germans (Heisenberg and Heisenberg 2016, p. 169).

But there is more to "Copenhagen", something that, after the war, Heisenberg and Weizsäcker systematically repressed: their active participation in Nazi-inspired cultural imperialism. Indeed, Heisenberg went, not only to the Copenhagen astrophysics workshop, rather also to many other places, gave similar talks, and behaved in a similar fashion (Walker 1995, pp. 123–181). This suggests that he did not go to Copenhagen only to look after and speak with Bohr, rather also for reasons of his own prestige and to support the German cultural mission. Foreign visits like the one to Copenhagen in September of 1941 were only possible because they appeared to serve the interests of the Nazi state. The German officials wanted Heisenberg because he drew natives into the DWIs or comparable institutions and facilitated cultural collaboration, or at least the appearance of it. Heisenberg was an effective "goodwill ambassador" precisely because he did not spread obvious propaganda, rather gave both technical and popular scientific talks while playing his "assigned role" in defending the Nazi "system".

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# 16 On the structural conditions for scientific amorality

*Susanne Heim*

At the beginning of the 20th century, Germany was among the leading nations in science. In late imperial Germany and the Weimar Republic, researchers in a variety of disciplines found excellent working conditions at German universities and at the institutes of the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gesellschaft (Kaiser Wilhelm Society), which was established in 1911 and expanded rapidly. Between the years of 1914 and 1932 alone, the society, which conceived of itself as a top research institution, ranked ten Nobel Prize winners among its members. Germany's defeat in the First World War notwithstanding, this flowering continued after 1918, science being considered an essential component of Germany's renewed rise to great-power status (Hachtmann 2007, pp. 102–109). This was not only a matter of national prestige but very much also a matter of practical aspects of global significance – namely efforts to increase Germany's limited resource base by means of science. Many scientists regarded it as a matter of course to increase their country's glory and resource base and to put their skills at its service. The Nazis' coming to power did not fundamentally change this self-perception.

So, when there is talk of “betrayal” on the part of intellectuals, the question arises: what does betrayal mean in this context? Whom did the intellectuals betray? Their fatherland? The obligation of science to serve the truth? Their colleagues persecuted by authoritarian governments? And was betrayal typical for intellectuals of the 1930s and early 1940s? In what respect were they different from today's intellectuals? What were the motives of German and non-German scientists for co-operating with an aggressive, authoritarian regime that disregarded human and minority rights?

## **Academic anti-Semitism in inter-war Europe**

Most scientists active during the 1930s and 1940s got their formative experience as students at the universities of inter-war Europe. The older ones among them may even have been teaching as professors at these universities. In post-1920 Central Europe, academia was a formative force in defining concepts of national identity, especially with regard to perceptions about the future integration of minorities into the labour market. Discrimination



against Jews became much more pronounced as jobs became scarce. Moreover, as a result of anti-Semitic propaganda, universities became battlegrounds of resentment and anxiety about unemployment as well as competition grounds for different elite groups. This set of circumstances made universities an environment that was particularly liable to couple traditional socio-economic narratives about Jews with ethnic interpretations of citizenship (Fritz and Rossoliński-Liebe 2016).

In Germany, racial anti-Semitism spread among parts of university faculties as early as the late 19th century. The nationalist agitation following the First World War consolidated the anti-Semitic prejudices held by the educated middle classes. Anti-Semitic attitudes towards Jewish students and academics became rapidly more extreme during the Great Depression. Nonetheless, before 1933, the universities of Berlin and other German cities were important migration destinations for Hungarian and Polish Jewish students and professors fleeing violent anti-Semitism in their respective countries of origin. In Poland, the national average percentage of Jewish university students decreased significantly during the 1920s and 1930s as a result of the imposition of anti-Semitic restrictions and sheer violence. The most widely known of these restrictions were the *numerus clausus*, which regulated the percentage of Jewish students allowed into university, as well as the so-called ghetto benches, which separated Jewish from non-Jewish students (Trębacz 2016). Another reason for the decline in Jewish students was the anti-Semitic terror exerted by Poland's radical nationalist and fascist student organisations, which abused, beat up and sometimes even battered to death Jewish students and in some cases professors, lecturers and assistants as well – especially in the 1930s. In Romania, student organisations developed into hotbeds of fascism that became extremely powerful over the years. Long before National Socialism came to power in Germany, Jewish students were excluded from universities in many European countries. And universities were often rather ingenious at finding ways to circumvent the regulations on minority protection they were obliged to abide by.

This was the soil that Nazi Germany's international connections in academia sprang from. All over Europe, the early 1930s were years of crisis and economic stagnation. Young academics who had recently graduated had little prospect of finding work in their chosen profession, let alone making a successful career for themselves. In Germany, all this changed in 1933. The dismissal of civil servants who were Jews, socialists, or simply members of the Centre Party created new job openings for opportunistic or politically indifferent career entrants. The young professionals who benefited from these “purges” thus became accessories to acts of injustice, and this complicity served to cement their loyalty to the system. The German example served as a model that encouraged scientists and intellectuals in other countries as well, especially those who had already fought for “cleansing” the universities of Jews (Krzywiec 2016, p. 79). But aggressive anti-Semitism was not a precondition for taking advantage of the exclusion of

Jewish academics. Some of the non-Jewish academics may well have regretted the dismissal of their Jewish colleagues but accepted it as unavoidable – and were willing to fill the vacancies.

### **German academics and the Nazi government**

For many years, the Nazis were presumed, at least in post-Second World War Germany, to have impeded the progress of science by limiting its freedom (Albrecht and Hermann 1990): by throwing Jewish and leftist scholars out of their jobs, by imposing certain ideological dogmas (like “Aryan physics” or “German mathematics”) and, indirectly, by isolating German scholars within the international scientific community (Heim 2001, p. 657).

This overall picture, however, was very convenient for many scientists who did not emigrate. By depicting the Nazi regime as hostile to science and its politicians as anti-intellectual, German scientists were able to portray themselves as having suffered under the Nazis’ policies without, ostensibly, having played an active role themselves. This perspective presents the involvement of scientists in crimes such as “euthanasia” and medical experiments on prisoners in concentration camps as a brutal or even perverse exception, while “pure” science remained comparatively untainted: the majority of the scientific community appears as having been apolitical, far removed from practical life, politics and criminal acts, and therefore easily transferred to a different political system. It was only certain fields, such as racial research and immediately war-related research, that were regarded as “tainted”.

This view has changed in recent years. Several studies conducted in various academic disciplines have emphasised that scientists did in fact take advantage of the opportunities the Nazi regime offered them to further their own careers and laid out how, in modern knowledge-based societies (Szöllösi-Janze 2000), scientific experts have served a particular function as organisers, mediators or innovators or been willing to co-operate and made contributions to war research (Deichmann 2001). Without the support of Germany’s top researchers, the National Socialist government could never have waged war for six years against the world’s most powerful economies. Far from being structurally unable to accommodate scientific innovation, the Nazi regime released enormous dynamic potential through its expansion of the war economy (Heim *et al.* 2009). The relationship between science and the Nazi regime was perhaps not always harmonious, but at its core it was an alliance shaped by a number of common interests. According to this line of interpretation, scientists pursued their own agendas in their dealings with the Nazi regime and continued to develop their own projects while at the same time, by contributing their particular expertise, furthering the Nazis’ research agenda (Ash 2002). They put their qualifications at the service of the Nazi system either because of their political beliefs or out of concern for their own careers or because of their dedication to science. And



it did not matter much which of these motives was the predominant one: it was not necessary to be a staunch Nazi to make one's career in Nazi Germany or to admire the government from abroad.

There are several examples of even former Communists and Social Democrats advancing considerably in their careers as long as their work was considered a relevant contribution to the advancement of science and/or the war effort.<sup>1</sup> At a time when war was becoming increasingly technology-driven and imperial utopias were expected to last forever, scientists were in greater demand than ever before. Their skills were needed, used and recognised, and with a few exceptions, employment of these skills was not curbed by ideological restrictions or political intervention – once the universities and research institutions had been “cleansed” in the early 1930s or had adapted to the new political situation.

In this system, contacts with colleagues abroad played an important role: the international reputation of German scientists was a symbolic capital or asset of sorts for the Nazi regime (Weiss 2005). For foreign scientists, contacts with German colleagues were attractive especially in those disciplines in which German research led the way. Thus, the Nazis' assumption of power gave a boost to the international eugenics movement, as Germany was the first country to make racist and eugenic ideas the principles underpinning its social policy. Racial researchers and eugenicists had a strong influence in the political arena (Kühl 1997).

In return for their co-operation, scientists were often given extremely favourable conditions for their research: money, the freedom to realise even gigantic plans that up to then had been considered utopian, the chance to continue in their career even during the war, quite direct political influence, freedom from ethical constraints, and the provision of all kinds of research material – even of human beings as guinea pigs.

Funding for scientific research increased considerably during the Nazi era, especially after 1936, when the Four-Year Plan authority was established, whose purpose was to prepare the German economy for the upcoming war. Between 1937 and 1943, investment into the major scientific institutions increased by about 100 per cent at the Kaiser Wilhelm Society and – with some minor interim cutbacks – nearly to the same degree at the German Research Foundation (Hachtmann 2007, pp. 1264–1265). Of course, not all disciplines profited to the same degree from this flow of money. The budget of institutes that conducted war-related research in a broader sense – i.e., not only armament research – increased more rapidly. This was the case for institutes that were involved in surrogate research or agricultural research, which was aimed at increasing Germany's resource base (Heim 2008, p. 21). Those institutes that were engaged in genetic and racial research did receive budget increases immediately after 1933, as they were supposed to provide legitimacy for Germany's not-yet-fully-accepted racial policies (Hachtmann 2007, pp. 218–223).

Once the war began, there were also other ways for scientists and intellectuals to profit from Nazi policy and hence new incentives for them to cooperate: the euphoria surrounding the supposedly permanent conquest of huge territories, particularly in Eastern Europe, opened new horizons for German demographers and resettlement experts, who combined racial, population and structural policy into a comprehensive and unified concept for – as they called it – “German reconstruction in the East”. The resettlement of entire population groups created room for the realisation of vast projects, allowed the provision of the necessary funding and cleared the way for the attempted construction – by force and at the expense of other people – of a society that was to be a model of efficiency in its social and economic organisation and infrastructure. *Generalplan Ost*, the master plan for the east, was a huge enterprise that entailed extensive interdisciplinary research and provided funding for sociologists, demographers, racial researchers, anthropologists, agricultural scientists, financial experts and geographers as well as regional and spatial planners (Rössler and Schleiermacher 1993; Heinemann 2006).

Furthermore, Germany’s expansion policy opened up access to new positions and to the resources of scientific institutions in the occupied countries. A head of department at a German research institution now had a chance of becoming director of a whole institute in the “East”. Once the German army had to retreat from the conquered territories, scientific collections, instruments and entire libraries were stolen from the occupied countries and taken to German institutes, and qualified researchers were invited or forced to move as well. Research institutes that relied to a considerable extent on manual labour could employ forced labourers when labour supply became scarce. They could even transfer their research to concentration camps, as a number of agricultural research institutions did (Heim 2008, pp. 133–149).

Finally, in an intellectual climate of utilitarianism in which human lives did not matter where “the people’s health” (*Volksgesundheit*) was concerned, medical researchers found ideal conditions for conducting human experiments. The sterilisation experiments of Carl Clauberg at Auschwitz, Otto Bickenbach’s experiments with chemical warfare agents in the concentration camp of Natzweiler (Schmaltz 2006; Weindling 2016, p. 516) and the research on euthanasia victims by internationally renowned scientists like Julius Hallervorden and Ernst Rüdin are among the most prominent examples of the unique conditions German scientists were given in Nazi Germany (Roelcke 2000). While their colleagues in democratic countries had to abide by human rights and international law, German scientists were not bound by the rule of informed consent. They did not have to rely on animal testing to gain information on the human body; they could use prisoners – even prisoners of war – and inmates of concentration camps, nursing homes and mental institutions. The studies the anatomist Hermann Stieve conducted on female inmates of the political prison of Plötzensee (Aly 1987, pp. 61–62) or the anthropological measuring Robert Ritter and



Eva Justin did on “gypsies” before they were killed in Auschwitz (Hohmann 1991) as well as many other human experiments yielded data that could be used by researchers to further their careers under any political conditions whatsoever. This kind of knowledge was an asset that could be transferred into fame and money even after Germany had lost the war. When these researchers were reintegrated into the international scientific community, having managed to conceal the source of their data and the way they had obtained it, they were envied by colleagues from abroad for the advancement in knowledge they had achieved – or even recruited to work in former enemy countries (Simpson 1988).

Until Germany’s defeat at Stalingrad in early 1943, these conditions appeared to be obvious advantages in international scientific competition. For many scientists, at least in countries allied to Nazi Germany, this made co-operation with German colleagues attractive. As long as it was by no means obvious that Germany would be defeated in the Second World War and that German science would lose its leading position on an international level, good relations with German institutions and scientists were rather attractive.

### **The international relations of German science**

The Nazis’ assumption of power in 1933 did by no means result in a severance of connections between German scientists and their colleagues abroad: in general, the Nazi government encouraged German scientists to maintain contact with their colleagues in other countries and to attend international conferences as well as to organise such conferences in Germany. To enjoy such support, German scientists didn’t have to be convinced Nazis or members of the NSDAP, and during the first years of the Nazi regime, i.e., before the beginning of the war, the structure of these relations did not change much. In general, close contact was maintained with scholars from the leading nations in science, such as the United States, Great Britain and – to a lesser degree – France, but also with the Netherlands and Belgium, while relations with Italy were, in the early years, not as close as one would imagine due to political tensions between Hitler and Mussolini over Austria. This, however, changed after 1936. The Kaiser Wilhelm Society even maintained several institutes in Italy, one of them – the cultural institute Bibliotheca Hertziana – intended to promote the German cause and German politics in an effective but subtle manner, i.e., with no dissemination of open propaganda (Hachtmann 2007, p. 552).

In 1935, the International Congress on Population Science took place in Berlin. For the German organisers, this was an excellent opportunity to present the new measures in the field of population policy introduced by the Nazi government and even first results of what was regarded as a “science-based population policy” (Heim and Schaz 1996). The conference was organised by the International Union for the Scientific Investigation of Population Problems and several German scientific societies on racial hygiene and statistics. The German branch of the Union had been

established in the late 1920s by the most influential German geneticists and racial researchers, such as Erwin Baur, Eugen Fischer, Fritz Lenz, Alfred Grotjahn and the statistician Friedrich Burgdörfer. The fact that the conference took place in Berlin not only provided international prestige for the Nazi government but also illustrated that population scientists felt at home in Germany. As Rüdiger Hachtmann (2007, p. 563) has put it, the international prestige German eugenicists enjoyed “had the effect that the National Socialist regime was relieved from external pressure. The racist policy of the dictatorship thus gained [...] not only the aura of being ‘normal’ but even of scientific progress”.

One of the most severe restrictions in international scientific relations was not ideological constraints but Germany’s lack of foreign currency. It was this circumstance, not a political attempt to limit international scientific exchange, that kept German delegations to international conferences small. Scientists who applied for a trip abroad at the German Conference Centre were obliged to submit a report afterwards. As a rule, they were not expected to spy on foreign colleagues but to enhance the reputation of German science – which, of course, was in the scientists’ own interests as well. And some of them seized the opportunity to give recommendations on “what needed to be done to ensure that German science [...] remain competitive on the world stage” (Weiss 2005, p. 15). This, once again, was in the scientists’ own interest; they did not need to be coerced into it.

Once the war began, foreign relations changed: Great Britain and France, and – at least from 1941 – the US as well became enemy countries. Scholarly relations shifted to the countries allied with Germany, to occupied Eastern Europe, and to South-eastern Europe as well as to some neutral countries such as Sweden. This shift took place in the context of Germany’s plans to restructure the economy of South-eastern Europe in accordance with the interests of German capital. The main idea was to transform the agrarian countries of the Southeast into a market for German products and a supply source of natural resources. Production in the region was to concentrate not on food, which in times of famine and general shortage would be consumed by the local population, but on industrial crops for export to Germany: tobacco, cotton, soy, animal feed crops, flax, hemp, linseed, sunflowers, rape, etc. (Aly and Heim 2002, p. 217; Ristović 2010; Freytag 2012).

Until 1939, these countries tried to avoid an overly lopsided economic bias, exporting a proportion of their domestic production to England and France, among other countries. Once the war began, Germany blocked all exports to the countries it was fighting. A German-dominated European trade area was now forced into existence by military power. Immediately before the outbreak of war, the Four-Year Plan Authority, the body headed by Hermann Göring that had been set up to prepare the German economy for warfare, also became actively involved in these matters. A study by the Forschungsstelle für Wehrwirtschaft (Research Bureau for War Economy) labelled “top secret” explored “the possibilities of a continental war economy under German leadership”. The economic



experts calculated the maximum “delivery” of natural resources that could possibly be extracted from each country. For their expert assessment, they had to draw on the knowledge of scholars in the area. One such expert was the Croatian agrarian economist Otto Frangeš. He had worked extensively on the economy and agriculture of Yugoslavia and had excellent international relations at many institutions, among them the World Economic Institute in the German city of Kiel. German scholars working on South-eastern Europe were familiar with his work and often invited him to conferences or to give lectures (Innerhofer 2010, pp. 226–227). Frangeš had published a large number of studies about the so-called agrarian overpopulation in South-eastern Europe. To combat overpopulation and poverty, he recommended the establishment of industry in rural areas. Otto Donner, a German economist who was, from the late 1930s, the head of the Research Bureau for War Economy within the Four-Year Plan Authority and had also been trained at the World Economic Institute, knew Frangeš’s work quite well. While he used Frangeš’s data for his own purposes, the conclusions he came to were quite different: according to him, overpopulation could best be abolished by sending the surplus workforce to Germany: “In many respects these migrant workers could become agents for change and economic development in the South-East. They would acquire discipline from us and accustom themselves to a faster pace of work” (Aly and Heim 2002, p. 225). Frangeš, who died in 1945, never distanced himself from his German colleagues, whose imperial ambitions he could not have failed to be aware of. Nevertheless, he co-operated, seeing an economic bloc in Central Europe that included Germany as the best solution to Yugoslavia’s economic crisis (Gross 2015, p. 161). So, did he “commit treason” against his country? Or did he “betray” science? In any case, his actions were not fundamentally different from what is considered common practice among today’s academics who usually don’t choose their partners according to political criteria but co-operate also with scientists in totalitarian states.

Plans for economic restructuring were just one part of the German policy in South-eastern Europe. The other one was a comprehensive cultural policy which, of course, included training researchers and scientists at German universities and Kaiser Wilhelm Institutes (Zarifi 2002, pp. 205–210). In 1940, a British observer reported that German was spoken in the big Sofia hotels, that the German ambassador was the most influential diplomat in Bulgaria, and that the press attaché of the German embassy was issuing instructions to newspapers on what they should write, while British propaganda, he felt, was too slow and plodding in putting its projects into action. “If we don’t do a thing promptly the Germans will step in and cut the ground from under our feet” (Gregson 1940, p. 90). The Germans’ most powerful weapon of propaganda, the British author believed, was the economic relationship. The Germans were not particularly well-liked, and the Bulgarians had a general feeling that they were losing out in the bargain; Bulgaria was in economic servitude to Germany and “it is seldom that the slave loves his master” (Gregson 1940, p. 97).

So, we see that international competition continued even during the war, and the fact that in the early 1940s – in the middle of the war! – the Kaiser

Wilhelm Society established a German-Bulgarian institute for agricultural research and several other institutes in South-eastern Europe shows that Germany was still a strong player in this competition. And this remained the case right until 1945, as illustrated by Allied task forces like the Alsos Mission scouring defeated Germany in search of all the scientists who were still considered to be ahead of their American, British and Russian colleagues and important enough to be hired by one of these countries.

## Conclusion

Nazi German scientists were neither abused nor misused; they placed their skills willingly at the disposal of the regime, whose offers they saw as an opportunity to advance both science and their own career. The participation of leading researchers in the war effort was not contingent on their agreement with the political aims of the NSDAP.

Examining the gradual orientation towards preparation for war and the work of scientists on substitute raw materials and the improvement of weapons systems, it is far more difficult to define the boundary between ethically unobjectionable research and misuse than it is in the case of a figure like Josef Mengele. There was a vast grey area in which scientists gave priority to their professional interests while abdicating general political responsibility and in which self-mobilisation plainly played a more important role than authoritarian dictates. Scientists did not need to submit to Nazi ideology, and they did not need to be forced to co-operate. All they needed to do was shift their research agenda a little bit towards what was needed and appreciated under the given conditions in order to make it fit the Nazi agenda.

Science is not a moral enterprise, although after the Doctor's Trial in Nuremberg and the discussion after Hiroshima helped to establish a catalogue of ethical criteria at least for some scientific branches. Nevertheless, there is no inherent morality in science – and no essential difference between German scientists and their foreign colleagues. Ethical boundaries have to be imposed on science from the outside, and they have to be made explicit in order to permit judgement on what does and does not constitute “betrayal”.

For an adequately nuanced examination of the structural conditions for scientific amorality, it is not sufficient to distinguish between guilt, involvement and innocence. Just as these conditions, cumulatively and in combination, were part of but not specific to National Socialism, so must their investigation be a task not just for historians: what is needed is an interdisciplinary study.

## Note

- 1 One of these was Walter Christaller, a geographer who before 1933 was a member of the German Social Democratic Party and from 1940 developed a considerable career as a spatial planner working for the “Germanisation” of occupied Polish territories (Aly and Heim 2002, p. 97).



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